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JANUARY 1992

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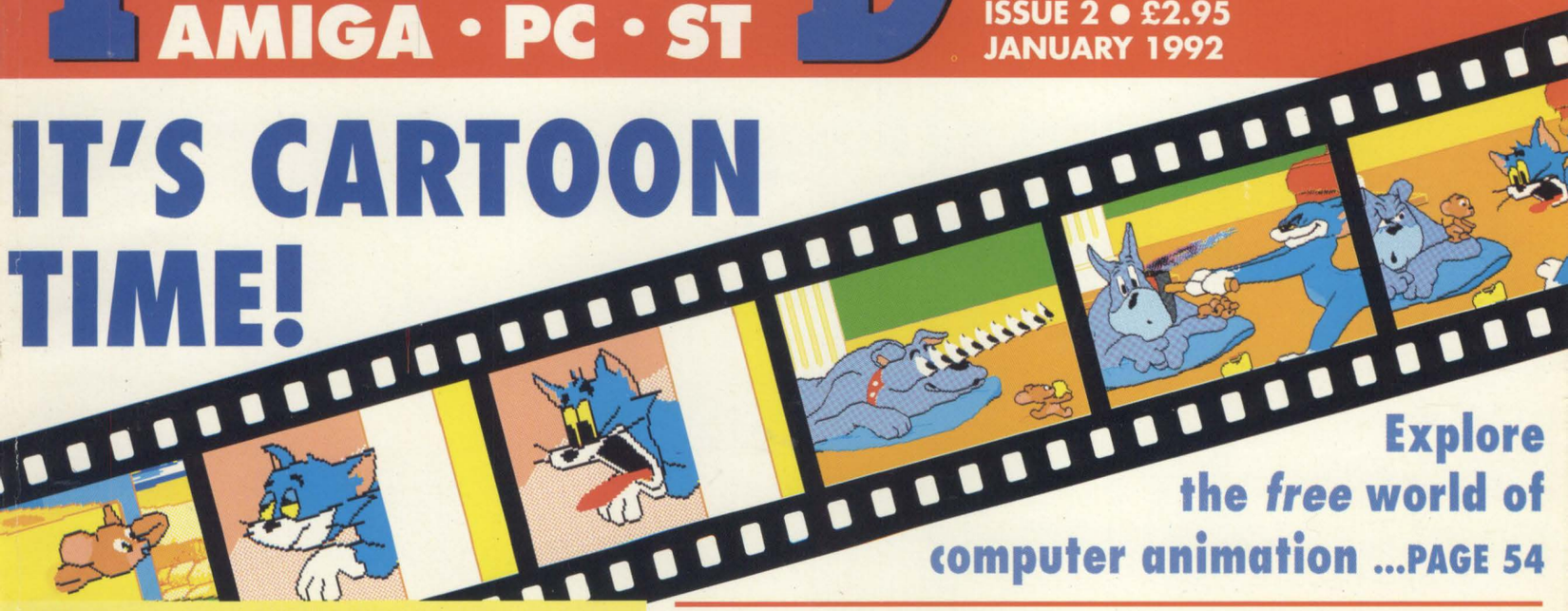

Explore the *free* world of computer animation ...PAGE 54

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PUBLIC DOMAIN COVER DISK 2

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Jumper: Frantic frog flipping fun!
Virus Checker: Hunt and kill those viruses
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PC

Solitile: Taxing Mah Jong-based puzzle game
PC Touch: Learn to touch-type the easy way!

ST

Ani ST: Create your own animations with this excellent program
VKiller: Protect your computer from harm with this virus killer

Program packed disk. Quick – turn to page 6 for details!

Tri-format disk © Rob Northen Computing

What no cover disk?

Why not ask the nice person behind the counter whether they are keeping it safe for you!

FULL DETAILS OF DISK ON PAGES 6-9

START A PD LIBRARY

We tell you what it takes to run your own public domain empire ...PAGE 88

THE BIG ADVENTURE

Discover the boundless magic of PD role-playing ...PAGE 48

MODEMS TRIED & TESTED ...PAGE 29

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APC39 – Video Pro-Titler (CGA) v2.8
APC15 – PC-Draft II v3.26
APC31 – Draft Choice V1.51
APC36 – PC-Draft-CAD v3.06
APC44 – T-Square v2.3 (4)
APC3 – PC-Key-Draw (4)
APC40 – EEDraw (electrical) (2)

PC INVESTMENTS

BPC20 – Investment Ledger v6.0
BPC40 – OWL Personal Portfolio Manager v3
BPC51 – Share Genius v1.10s

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BPC30 – Business Manager (2)
BPC13 – POS (Point Of Sale)

PC BUSINESS - COSTING

BPC34 – IN-Control (2)
BPC35 – Service Plus (time billing) (2)
BPC39 – OWL Action Item Manager
BPC41 – Ample Notice v2.01
BPC44 – Resident Task Manager v2.10
BPC45 – EarlyBird v1.0e
BPC47 – FRIDAY v1.50
BPC37 – Calendar Mate v4.1
BPC50 – Personal Calendar v14.20
BPC48 – C.A.R.S. v2.5
BPC54 – LeadMaster

PC COMMUNICATION

CR28 – GTPower v16.00 (4)
CR29 – ODYSSEY v1.42
CR31 – LOGICOMM (for OS/2) v2.025
CR14 – WildCat BBS system (2)
CR23 – AutoSig, compuserve front end v6.3a
CR24 – PC-Ham v5.32
CR13 – Morse tutorials

PC DATABASE

DB3 – WAMPUM v4.2 (UK version)
DB45 – PC-File v5.01 (3)
DB48 – ZEPHYR foxpro clone (2)
DB52 – SR-Info v3.41 (upgrade to vp-info) (2)
DB7 – Instant Recall, memory resident v1.5x
DB4 – Mass appeal Mailing List Manager
DB53 – CATALIST v3.27 list manager

PC GAMES

GPC38 – Jacaranda Jim Adventure v2.23
GPC126 – T-ZERO adventure v1.03
GPC18 – 2 Chess games on one disk
GPC128 – EGA Trek v2.31
GPC130 – SUPERFLY v1.1 action game
GPC138 – Tear Down The Wall!
GPC35 – Amy's First Primer
GPC75 – Amandas Letter Lotto v1.0
GPC132 – Blackjack! v2.20D
GPC136 – Picture Puzzle v1.2
GPC134 – Moraff's SUPER BLAST
GPC135 – Moraff's ENTRAP v2.0
GPC140 – BUBBLE TROUBLE (vga/cga)
GPC88 – Captain Comic, brilliant!
GPC120 – VGA Catchem'

PC MUSIC

MPC1 – Pianoman, compose your own music
MPC4 – Sequencer Plus (2)
MPC10 – Musical block v1.0 composing sys'
MPC11 – Melody Master v1.6
MPC12 – Musicians Toolbox
MPC13 – Melissa's Music Flashcards v1.0

PC CLIP-ART & PICTURES

P18 – MacPics, excellent fantasy art (2)
P6 – 297 pics in .PCC format (vga)
P8 – Dropcaps in GEM .IMG format
P9 – Animal Pics in .PCX format (9)
P24 – Office, 99 .IMG files of office art
P31 – HD clipart sampler, 40 .PCX pics
P32 – SmartArt, over 70 in .IMG format
P15 – AutoCad symbols, in .DWG format

PROGRAMMERS AIDS

LPC59 – Programmers Productivity v2.6 (2)
LPC7 – Screen designer (cga)
LPC63 – DialogPro v2.1
LPC67 – HYPERPAD v2.2 (5)
LPC73 – Screen World v1.1
LPC35 – TechnoJocks Turbo Toolbox v5 (2)
LPC69 – DOSREF 19 technical reference

PC SPECIAL INTEREST

SI-31 – Night Sky v2.08 (4)
SI-9 – Crossword Creator v4.3
SI-71 – Bible Reader, entire old/new test' (5)
SI-22 – GCSE Physics v2.1
SI-23 – GCSE Computer Studies v2.1
SI-118 – GCSE Integrated Science v1.1
SI-127 – GCSE Mathematics v1.1
SI-110 – School-Mom kids education v3.57
SI-51 – SUPERBEAM PC v1.35s
SI-122 – The Athletes Abacus v4
SI-137 – CV-Master, write your own!

PC SPREADSHEETS

SS2 – AsEasyAs v4.0 - the best
SS4 – PC-Calc+ v2.0 (3)
SS15 – INSTACALC v3.00 (pop-up)
SS18 – ALITE v1.0, newest program around

PC UTILITIES

UPC9 – AutoMenu v4.7
UPC125 – PowerMenu v5.32
UPC135 – Executive Director v2.09
UPC157 – Tree Top v2.44
UPC122 – PKZip & PKMenu
UPC129 – 4DOS v3.02
UPC25 – FlexiBak Plus v1.0
UPC144 – Turbo-Copy v2.01
UPC142 – FluShot+ v1.7 anti-virus
UPC145 – Graphics Workshop v2.2 (2)
UPC172 – MenuDirect Gold v3.0 (2)

PC WORD PRO'S - HYPERTEXT

WPC12 – Word Processor for Kids
WPC79 – PC-Type4 (4)
WPC101 – Galaxy Lite v1.7
WPC114 – Word Fugue v2.00 (2)
WPC4 – PC-Write v2.6
WPC70 – Hypershell v4.0 (3)
WPC117 – RUBICON DTP package v2.2c (2)

PC WINDOWS 3.0

WIN1 – Paint Shop v2.02
WIN3 – WINEDIT v1.1a text editor
WIN5 – Command Post v7.0s
WIN8 – WINPOST v3.0b, electronic post-it!
WIN9,10,11 – ICONS (3000!) + Icon View, IconMaster 0.15, Wallpaper bmp. (3)
WIN12 – Games - Roach, Tiles, Life, Puzzle
WIN14 – WinNav v3.00. 16 & Notebook
WIN15 – Winlock, Unzip, HP-Calc, VirX, Launch
WIN16 – Cards - Casino Poker, Calc' Solitaire
WIN13 – IconChooser, Address Manager etc

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GAME94 – Super Breakout (hiRes)
GAME100 – Sorcerer's Strategy
GAME61 – KID potate, ABC, Sketch, Story
GAME45 – Floyd the Droid shoot 'em up!

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SOF694 – A-Gene geaneology (1 Meg)
SOF702 – AIM image processor (2)
SOF592 – INTRO Maker
SOF549 – ARP 1.3 - long awaited!
SOF240 – Chet Solace 1, 26 utilities on disk
SOF729 – Mandelbrot Generator
SOF736 – EDUCATION disk

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UANIM5 – F15, HappyGuy, Window
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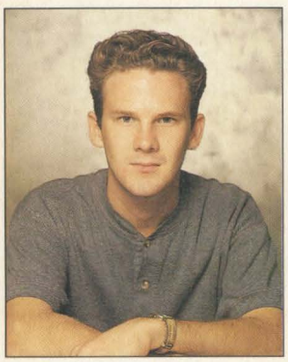
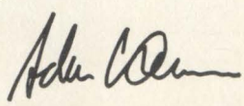


Hi, and welcome to issue two of *Public Domain*.

The first issue went down so well that we've decided to go monthly after just one issue – so you'll be getting the lowdown on what's worth having in public domain and shareware twice as often! Thanks to all of you for making it possible.

But if this is the first time you've picked up *Public Domain* then you have a real treat in store. It's our policy to review and rate as many programs as we can each issue, and as in much depth as possible. There's so much software available as PD and shareware that everybody could do with a few pointers in choosing what's best for them. Our reviewers are under strict instructions to rate them as they would any full-priced product. So you know that the stuff you're getting is not only cheap, but is also of good quality!

Christmas is coming and we've got into a real festive mood. Allow us to 'present' you with our coverdisk packed with PD and shareware, so that after you've stuffed yourself with Christmas pud you'll be able to avoid the Queen's speech and give your overworked computer a treat, too!



THE PD TEAM – ISSUE 2

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Ready and raring to get those our exciting cover disk programs loaded into your machine? Find out what they can do and how you can get them up and running with our simple-to-follow guidelines. **Plus:** how to find your way around *Public Domain*

10 News
How will the Amiga 500 Plus affect the PD scene? What's happened to the MPH PD library? Find the answers to these and many more questions in our round-up of the latest PD news

14 Letters
Got a gripe? Got an amazing idea you want the world to know about? Your chance to to get your views known in the essential forum for all things PD

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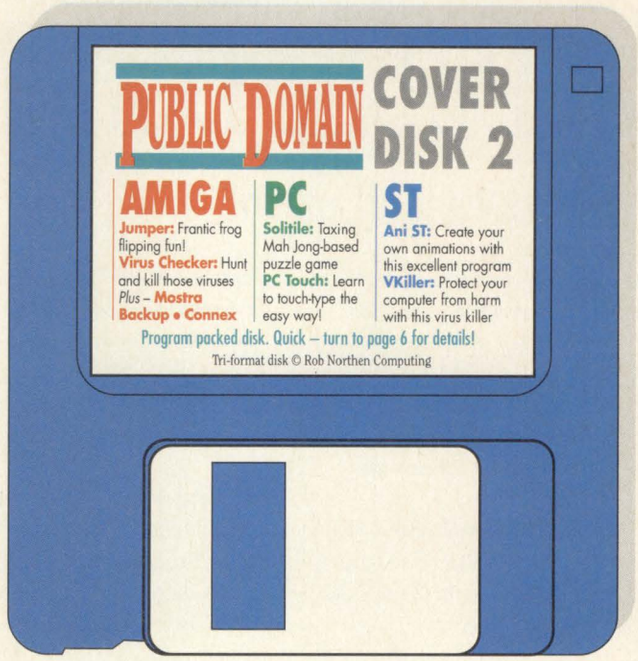
COVER DISK NO.2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Jumper: Frantic frog flipping fun!
Virus Checker: Hunt and kill those viruses
Plus – Mostra Backup • Connex
PC
Solitile: Taxing Mah Jong-based puzzle game
PC Touch: Learn to touch-type the easy way!
ST
Ani ST: Create your own animations with this excellent program
VKiller: Protect your computer from harm with this virus killer
Program packed disk. Quick – turn to page 6 for details!
Tri-format disk © Rob Northen Computing

Got an Amiga? ..... Turn to page 7.....

- **Jumper** Guide your frog across a busy road. Classic arcade action captured on your machine
- **Virus Checker** Search, locate and destroy those potentially disastrous viruses
- **Connex** Perplexing puzzle game
- **Mostra** View any IFF graphic file with ease

Got a PC? ..... Turn to page 8.....

- **Solitile** Tile we meet again – Mah Jong, that ancient eastern game of strategy, brought to colourful and elegant life on your PC
- **PC Touch** Don't get touchy about your typing abilities. Type with speed and accuracy without looking at the keyboard thanks to *PC Touch*

Got an ST? ..... Turn to page 9.....

- **Ani ST** Animation made easy. You draw the pictures and *Ani ST* does all the hard work of getting the images to look like they move
- **VKiller** Protect your disks and boot those 'orrible viruses off your machine with this simple-to-use but powerful and effective utility

Making the most of Public Domain

What does it all mean?

● **Public Domain** is a generic term which at its simplest and purest level refers to non-copyrighted software which can be distributed freely. You can copy a public domain disk with no fear of breaking copyright laws. If you order disks from a library, then in theory you should only be charged for the distribution and copying costs.

Freeware is virtually the same as PD except that the author retains the copyright to his program and you are not allowed to alter the program in any way.

● **Shareware:** Operates on a try-before-you buy basis. Distributed in the same way as PD software (your mates can copy it), the difference being that if you like the program and intend to use it regularly you are required to send off a registration fee. This is usually fairly minimal, and often represents good value as some shareware programs rival commercial counterparts. Another form of shareware is bannerware. These programs are cut-down versions of commercial or shareware programs which are released into the public domain as a teaser, in the hope that it'll impress you so much you'll want to buy the full-priced versions.

● **Licenceware:** Not really PD at all, though it is usually distributed by the same libraries. Certain libraries are licensed to sell the software, and for every copy of the program sold the author receives a royalty. Licenceware cannot be copied freely among friends.

● **Otherware:** You might come across such terms as giftware, charityware and even chocolateware while browsing through library catalogues. These are usually pretty rare, and require you to send some sort of gift to the author (the clue is usually in the name) or some other organisation they have nominated.

Colour coding...

Being a multi-format magazine – we cover the ST, PC and Amiga in equal measure – there will be some sections that will be relevant to only one type of computer. So to make life easier we've colour-coded the magazine so that you tell instantly if a review or article will appeal to you...

Amiga All AMIGA-related articles are indicated in RED

PC All PC-related articles are indicated in GREEN

ST All ST-related articles are indicated in BLUE

Everything else should be of interest to everyone.

Where to get PD software

There are literally hundreds of public domain and shareware libraries around the country, and most of the programs we review are available from more than one of them. We give the name of the library that sent us the software for review, but if you see a program that takes your fancy it will probably be available from other libraries as well, so there's no harm in shopping around. And don't forget to check out the ads in this issue as well. There's an ad index at the back of the mag to help you find track down libraries.

If you run a PD library and you want a mention, then the best way to make sure you get one is to send us in some software!

Cover disk
Welcome to the second Public Domain cover disk. This program-packed piece of plastic contains software for three computers: the Amiga, ST and PC. This is all possible because of a custom disk format specially developed for Public Domain. Hope you enjoy it.

Shareware Contributions

Please note that many of the programs on the public domain cover disk are shareware. You are therefore morally bound to pay the programmer a minimal shareware contribution if you decide to continue using their program. Full details on how to register your copy of the shareware utilities are included in the documentation files for each program. Do the decent thing.

Disk problems

We test the programs on the cover disk as thoroughly as possible. However, the custom format of the disk is very complicated. Should you experience difficulties with your disk, there are two courses of action to take, depending on the nature of the problem:

Disk won't load?

In the instance that you can't load *any* of the programs or an error occurs when you try to access the cover disk, chances are that you have an incorrectly duplicated disk. *Public Domain* is responsible for more copying than 70,000 disks, and of those it is possible that a few of them haven't been duplicated properly. If this sounds like the problem you've been experiencing, send the disk, together with an SAE to:

Public Domain January Disk, Disk Copy Labs, Unit A, Westmarch, London Road, Daventry, Northants NN4 4SA.

A replacement disk will be winging its way to you as soon as possible.

Program won't run?

One the other hand, if you have a problem with one or more of the *programs* on the disk, such as you can get them running but they crash or you can't access certain functions, then we'd like to hear about it. Write to us at the address below, telling us what went wrong and anything else you think is relevant. Information on the type of system and set-up you have could also be useful. Send these details to:

Cover Disk Problems, *Public Domain*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

We'll try and find out what the problem is and print an explanation or a solution in the next issue

Getting Started

Before you attempt to use any of the Amiga programs on the *Public Domain* cover disk, we strongly advise that you make a back-up copy. Here's what to do:

1. Format a blank disk on to which you can transfer the programs. To do this, re-boot your machine (by pressing the Ctrl and the two 'Amiga' keys situated at each side of the space bar) and put your copy of the Workbench disk in the disk drive. When the Workbench screen comes up, take out your Workbench disk and insert the disk you want to format. Highlight that disk's icon by clicking on it, then hold down the right mouse button and move the cursor to the top of the screen. Select Initialise from the Disk menu and follow its instructions. Pretty soon have you'll have a blank disk.
2. Re-boot again and insert your cover disk in your disk drive.
3. The disk's icon, labelled Tri-Format Disk, will appear. Click on it with the mouse to display the programs on the disk. You should only run one program off the original cover disk: the program called *Backup*. Click on the *Backup* icon to run the program, and follow its instructions.
4. When you have made your back-up copy, put your original cover disk in a safe place. All of the programs can be run from the copied disk by double-clicking on the appropriate program's icon to open up its window, then on the file itself.

Jumper (PD)

Jumper is an Amiga version of the classic arcade game *Frogger* which has been 'customised' for the Commodore machine.

The idea behind *Jumper* is simple; you have to guide the frog across a road and a fast-flowing river to get it to its home.

There's no toad tunnels on this road so you'll have to guide your frog through the traffic

On the way there are several obstacles to tackle. The road is extremely busy, filled with a variety of fast-moving cars and trucks, so becoming a frog pancake is a distinct possibility. Once the frog has managed to traverse the road, it then has to contend with the river which it crosses by jumping on logs and lily pads. If he misses he croaks it.

You have to get five frogs from one side of the road to the far side of the river before you can progress to the next level. The game can be played by one or two players and is joystick-controlled. Clicking on the left mouse button exits the program.

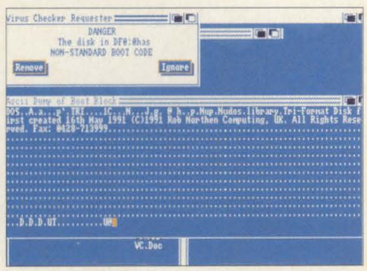
Virus Checker (PD)

You can never be too careful these days. Any of the disks you put in your computer could be infected by a virus that could potentially destroy your whole software collection.

To prevent this happening, *Virus Checker* is a small yet handy utility that can hunt and kill a wide variety of bootblock and link viruses. Written in New Zealand, the program is updated on a regular basis.

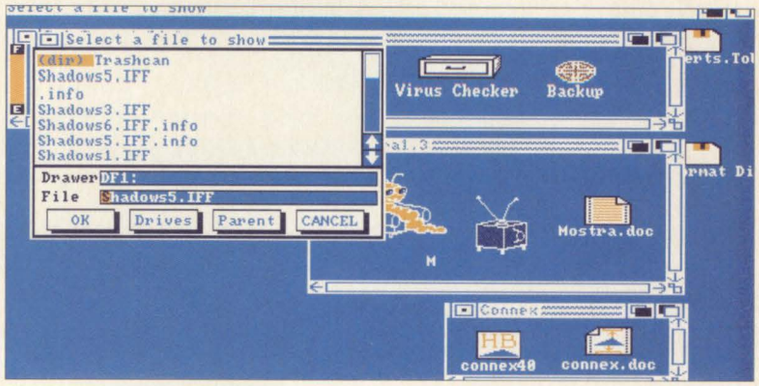
Once run, *Virus Checker* will stay in the background when you load other multi-tasking programs, and will check every disk that you insert into any of your Amiga's disk drives, warning you if it finds anything suspicious. An essential program.

WARNING: If you load *Virus Checker* directly from the cover disk, it will warn you that the disk's bootblock isn't a standard one. Don't worry, there isn't a virus on the disk. The bootblock of the disk *is* a custom one, specially generated so that the program that lets you make a copy of the disk (called *Backup*, which is also on the cover disk) can determine how much data to copy.



If you run *Virus Checker* from our cover disk it displays this message. Don't panic, the disk hasn't got a virus, just a custom bootblock

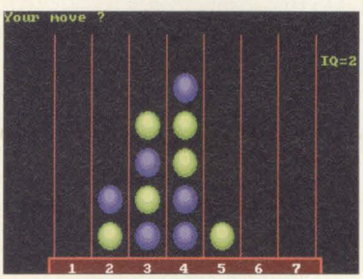
The tri-format disk's non-standard bootblock means it will be treated as suspicious by most virus checkers. To get around this use the *Backup* program and make a copy of the disk. All of the files will then be copied to your normal formatted disk and the alarm won't be raised again. Unless you have a real virus, that is.



Using a traditional Amiga requester menu, *Mostra* lets you load virtually any IFF graphics file

Connex (Shareware)

This game needs no introduction. Its name almost gives it away — it's a variation of the classic strategy game, *Connect Four*.



***Connex*: The green player is three quarters on the way to winning with three disks in a row**

The idea is to be the first player to arrange four of your coloured pieces in a straight line in a rack, while at the same time preventing the other player from doing the same.

You use the mouse to place the pieces; just click on the column you want the piece to fall in. You can play either against the computer but the game's at its best when you play against a mate.

The shareware registration fee for Connex is £6.95 payable to: PC Solutions, PO Box 954, Bournemouth BH7 6YT.

Mostra (Shareware)

The Amiga is a strange machine. There are so many different graphics modes for the machine that most programs, even specialist graphic packages, can't display pictures from all of them.

Until now, that is. *Mostra* is a great tool capable of displaying IFF graphic files from all of the Amiga's graphic modes. Now you can view pictures before you put them in a slideshow, or display any other IFF pictures off a disk.

When you run *Mostra* it displays a requester box on-screen. To view a file, select the drive which contains the graphic file you want displayed as an IFF picture, then click on the file to load it. If you don't want to load a picture, just click on Cancel to exit.

Shareware registration for Mostra costs $20 (about £12) payable to: Sebastiano Vigna, Via Valparaiso 18, 20144 Milano, Italy.

Problems?

A few gremlins crept into the instructions on how to copy the Amiga disk last month. Basically the commands were there, but the way they were printed meant that the Amiga didn't understand them.

The problem was with step four of the instructions which should have read:

```
COPY C:MAKEDIR|COPY|INSTALL RAM:
PATH RAM: ADD
MAKEDIR RAM:PD
```

Remember to press Return at the end of each line. The '|' character is found at the top right of the Amiga's keyboard, next to the backspace key. To type the character, press Shift and \

The *Backup* program included on this month's cover disk will not back up last month's disk – it can only be used for the disk it came with.

COVER DISK – PC

Solitile (Shareware)

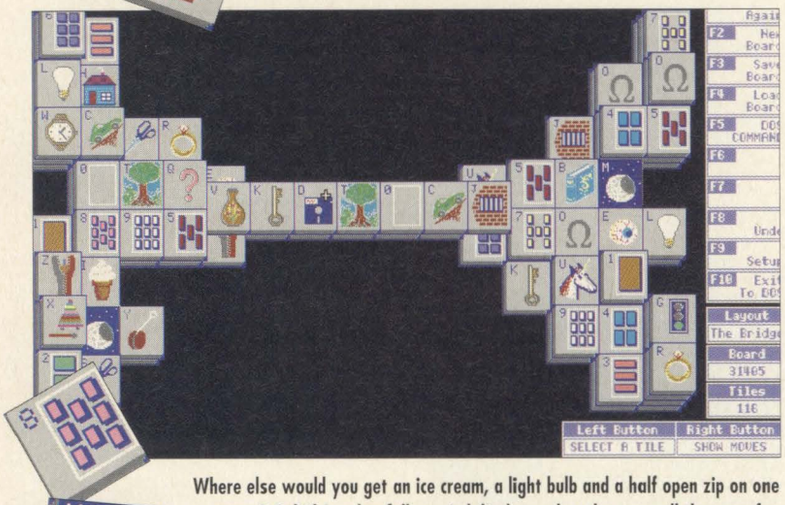
Close your eyes and imagine a small café somewhere in China (do they have cafés in China?) Imagine two elderly Chinese gentlemen seated at a small table outside the café. On the table is a pile of white tiles, each with different designs on them. The two men take turns at moving the tiles, trying to match them up. What they're doing is playing Mah Jong, a centuries-old oriental game.

Now you don't have to go to China to play this game, or even sit at a table – you've got a version of Mah Jong on this month's cover disk, although, in reality, *Solitile* is more of a variant of the game.

Solitile can be controlled by either the keyboard or a mouse – the program will be able to detect the mouse driver if you do have a mouse plugged in.

As its name suggests, *Solitile* is a one-player game. The aim of *Solitile* is to clear the board of tiles. You do this by matching two identical tiles at a time. When you do the matching pair vanish from the board, revealing more tiles beneath.

There will be some games where you'll find it impossible to clear the board, but don't worry. Just reset the game and start all over again. We guarantee that you'll want to, because *Solitile* is deadly addictive.



Where else would you get an ice cream, a light bulb and a half open zip on one screen? *Solitile*'s colourfully varied display makes the game all the more fun

Running Solitile

Insert your back-up copy of the cover disk into your floppy drive. Change to the PC directory by typing

```
CD PC
```

and then

```
CD SOLITILE
```

to get into the the SOLITILE directory. Finally, type

```
SOLITILE
```

to run the game. Remember to press RETURN after each line.

The documentation to the program can be seen by viewing the file SOLITILE.DOC; the easiest way of doing so is by entering TYPE SOLITILE.DOC.

The shareware registration fee for Solitile is $10 (about £6) payable to Everett Kaser at 35405 Spruce Street, Albany, Oregon 97321, USA.

A word of warning

Last month a number of PC users had a problem with the game *Frak*. This problem *only* arises when *Frak* is directly run off the cover disk. Because the program tries to save high score details back to the cover disk, it will corrupt the PC formatted part of the disk if it isn't write protected, rendering it useless.

This emphasises the importance of making a back-up copy of the cover disk. Always do this, so that if something does go wrong then you'll be 'insured'.

Getting Started

Before you attempt to run any of the programs on the *Public Domain* cover disk, you must first back-up your disk. Don't worry – this isn't at all complicated. If you follow the instructions below, your cover disk will be backed up in no time.

1. Format a blank disk using the MSDOS Format command and keep it safe.
2. Next, write protect your cover disk – move the tab on the back so you can see through the hole.
3. Use the XCOPY command to make the back-up. With your system disk in drive A: enter the following command – `XCOPY A:\PC\*.* B: /W`. When prompted, insert your cover disk in drive A: and your freshly formatted disk in drive B:. If you're using a single drive system, XCOPY will treat your single drive as both A: and B: so just follow the on-screen prompts and you won't go far wrong.
4. If you want to back up this disk to hard drive, enter the following command – `XCOPY A:\PC\*.* C:`

PC Touch (PD)

Typing is an essential part of computing, and the faster you can type, the more quickly you can get things done. Doesn't it look impressive when someone types at lightning speed, and the words actually make sense? Well this could soon be you thanks to *PC Touch*!

PC Touch teaches you to touch-type without you having to spend ages down the local night school being taught by some woman that looks like Norman Bates' mother. Unlike other similar programs it is very accommodating towards mistakes, and is educational at the same time.

The way the program works is to display a phrase or a part of a passage on-screen and you have to type it in, punctuation and all. You can't correct mistakes, because one of the program's aims is to get you to type without making errors. You can start off by looking at the keys while you type, but as you learn the positions of the keys you shouldn't need to look at them as much.

PC Touch keeps a running total of the percentage of the correct key presses you have made, as well as your typing speed, which is a quick indication of how well you are doing.

Running PC Touch

Insert your back-up copy of the cover disk into your floppy drive (read the instructions above on how to make a back-up copy of the cover disk).

Change to the PC directory by typing

```
CD PC
```

and then get in to the *PC Touch* directory by typing

```
CD PCTOUCH
```

and finally type

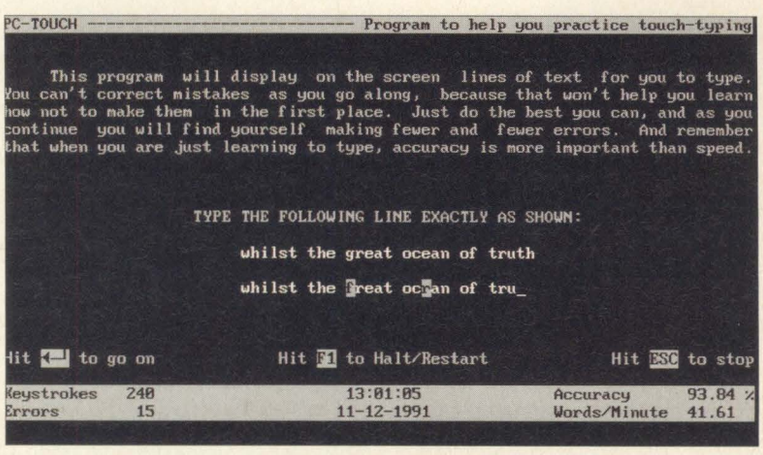
```
PC-TOUCH
```

to run the program. Don't forget to press RETURN after each line.

There is documentation on the disk, in a file called PC-TOUCH.DOC. To read it type in

```
TYPE PC-TOUCH.DOC
```

For all programmers there is a listing of the program in the file BASIC.

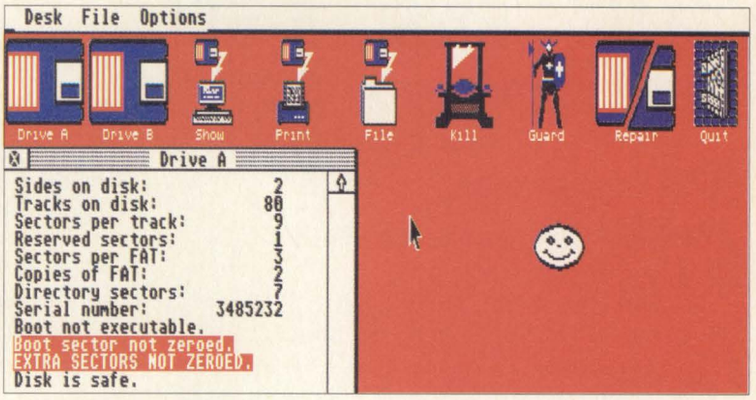

PC-TOUCH ---------- Program to help you practice touch-typing
This program will display on the screen lines of text for you to type. You can't correct mistakes as you go along, because that won't help you learn how not to make them in the first place. Just do the best you can, and as you continue you will find yourself making fewer and fewer errors. And remember that when you are just learning to type, accuracy is more important than speed.
TYPE THE FOLLOWING LINE EXACTLY AS SHOWN:
whilst the great ocean of truth
whilst the great ocean of tru_
Hit ↵ to go on
Hit F1 to Halt/Restart
Hit ESC to stop
Keystrokes 240
Errors 15
13:01:05
11-12-1991
Accuracy 93.84 %
Words/Minute 41.61

***PC Touch* is a touch-typing tutor program that keeps close track on how you are progressing**

Getting Started

Before you attempt to use any of the programs on the *Public Domain* cover disk, we strongly advise you to make a back-up of your copy of the cover disk. Here's how:

1. Format a blank disk.
2. Write protect the original *Public Domain* cover disk and insert it into the internal drive. Double click on the drive A icon and select the ST drawer icon and drag it across onto the drive B icon. If you have twin drives, then insert your blank disk into drive B and proceed.
3. If you only have a single drive, follow the on-screen dialogue boxes until the disk is successfully backed up. This will take a fair bit of disk swapping, but be patient.

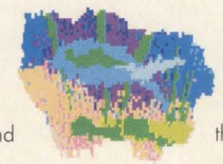


***VKiller* won't always be happy with your disks – if it finds a virus it'll tell you!**

Ani ST (PD)

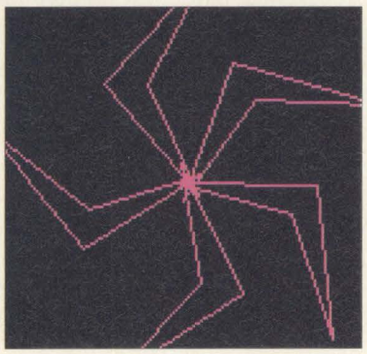
Good-looking graphics are impressive, but to really stretch your ST an animation package is the way to go. *Ani ST* is an impressive piece of programming for the ST. Originally a commercial package known as *Aegis Animator*, it has recently been put into the public domain by its author, Jim Kent, who has improved the program as well.

Ani ST works as a 'tweener', which, in animation terms, means it generates the frames between two pictures. So, for example, you could draw the object you want to move in one position on screen, then place it in the position you want it to move it to, and the computer will 'draw' the frames between them. This is an extremely simplified explanation of the *Ani ST*'s abilities, and it's capable of much more than just this.



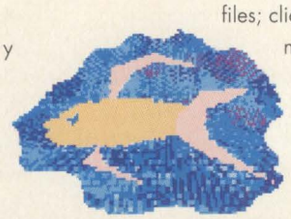
When *Ani ST* first loads y are confronted by a black screen with a little box with icons in it. This is called the Fast Menu, and enables you to access *Ani ST*'s various functions from icons rather than the traditional pull-down menus.

There are number of demonstration files on the disk. To load one of these – let's say LITTLESEA because it's the best – click on the disk icon in the Fast Menu box. This brings up a selection of file names with the suffix .SCR (which means they are animation scripts).



Apart from cartoons, *Ani ST* can also be used to animate geometric shapes

To the left of the box are a list of files; click on the LITTLESEA name to highlight it, then click on Load. Once the file has loaded exit the file box by clicking in its top left corner to get back to the main selection screen. Click on the icon that looks like a film projector (the larger one) to have a look at the animation.



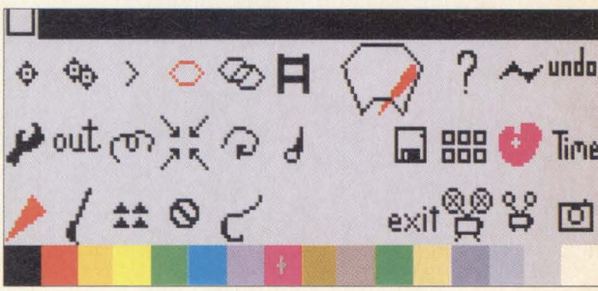
Complex animations such as *LITTLESEA*, included on the cover disk, show just what *Ani ST* can do

Running Ani ST

Before you do anything, make a copy of the cover disk (see the box elsewhere on this page for details on how to back-up the disk).

Once you've made a copy, click on the ST folder and then the *Ani ST* folder. *Ani ST* will only run in the ST's low resolution mode, so change to that mode if you aren't already in it. To run the program, click on the ANIST.PRG icon.

Another file on the disk contains the full documentation for the program. To see this, click on the file called ANIST.DOC and then Show or Print to display the file on the screen or to print it out. If you want to display the documentation on-screen it's a good idea to change the ST's screen mode to medium resolution, as it is almost unreadable in low-res mode.



The easy-to-use Fast Menu automatically pops up when *Ani ST* first loads. It makes the program's functions quickly accessible

VKiller (PD)

To accompany our feature on viruses this issue, we included *VKiller*, an ST virus-killer, on our cover disk. It not only has an attractive front-end, but it is also a very competent program.

It is capable of hunting and killing a variety of ST viruses and can protect other disks from infection as well as repair damaged boot sectors on other disks, for example.

Running VKiller

Before you do anything, make a copy of the cover disk (see the box elsewhere on this page for details on how to back-up the disk).

Once you've made a copy, click on the ST folder and then the *VKiller* folder. To run the program, click on the VKILLER.PRG icon.

There is also documentation for the program on the disk, which goes into *VKiller*'s functions in great detail. To view this file, called VKILLER.DOC, click on its icon and then click on Show to display it on-screen or Print to print it out.

Word of warning

Unfortunately our customised tri-format cover disk cannot be read by STs equipped with single-sided disk drives. This only affects owners of older STs, and not the more modern double-sided-equipped machines which are far more common.

If you do have an ST equipped with a single-sided drive, we recommend that you upgrade to a double-sided drive (it costs £50-60) and that way you'll be able to run the majority of software on the market as well as use the cover disk.

However, if that's a bit out of your range then send the cover disk along with an SAE back here to the *Public Domain* office at 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW and we'll pop the software on a single-sided disk for you.

MPH ceases trading

ST PD library MPH Computer Specialists Ltd, has officially ceased trading.

This was largely due to difficulties that MPH had with other companies regarding the distribution of its software.

If you have placed an order with the company paying by cheque and have not received your goods then send an SAE to the company to try to reclaim your cheque. Credit card orders will not have been debited until the goods were despatched, so there's no need to worry if you paid this way. **Contact: MPH Computer Services, 10 Chandlers Court, Eaton, Norwich NR4 6EY.**

Show success

The World of Commodore show held between the 14th and 17th of November was a great success, with attendance figures far in excess of those of last year.

The show was organised by Future Publishing, the company behind *Public Domain* and sister title *Amiga Format*. It was attended by 35,790 people over the four days it ran and opening hours had to extended.

PD libraries exhibiting included the 16/32 PDL and 17 bit software. Steve Colbeck of 17 bit said that the show was "Tremendously successful, we sold a lot of disks. The Commodore market's reaching a peak."

Cute computers

Don't know what to as your Great Aunt for a Christmas present? How about a Critter? Critters have legs, arms and a head, and are attached to the computer's monitor with Velcro pads. They should inject some personality into even the dullest-looking cream box. The range includes a Rabbit, a Bear, a Dragon and a Fanged Thing. They cost £24.99 (plus £2 postage) and are available from **Crittercal Computers Ltd, PO Box 300A, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 5YA.**

George Thomson goes veggie

Amiga PD and shareware distributor George Thomson Services has recently moved. The company can now be reached at: **Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654.**

PD or not PD? That is the question

In the last issue of *Public Domain* we printed a review of *Bonk the Gonk* for the ST, with NBS incorrectly credited as the supplier. This game is *not* distributed by NBS, nor is it public domain. The supplier is **MTS, Greensward House, The Broadway, Totland, Ilse of Wight PO39 0BX.**

PD COMPATIBILITY PROBLEMS

Amiga PD software has run into compatibility problems with Commodore's new entry-level Amiga, the 500 Plus.

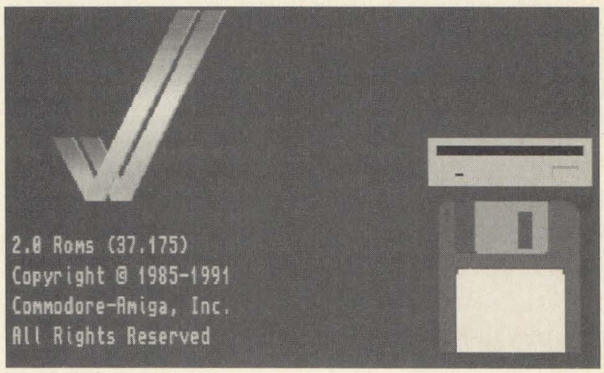
Commodore's surprise launch of the Amiga 500 Plus in October may have advanced the course of Amiga technology, but its upgraded Kickstart chip and Workbench operating system prevents many programs from running on the machine.

Originally Commodore was intending to release the 500 Plus some time in the New Year but was forced to introduce it earlier due to shortages of the older model.

The 500 Plus is equipped with the latest versions of the Amiga operating system: Kickstart 2.0 and Workbench 2.0. It also has upgrades of the Amiga's famous custom chips, previously only found in the top-end Amiga 3000. The machine has 1Mb of RAM on the motherboard – a departure from using the traditional 'hatch' beneath the machine – and this extra 512K is configured as chip memory instead of fast memory. All these changes cause potential compatibility problems.

Buyers of the new machine are not warned of the problem when they purchase the computer.

Although Commodore has reportedly tested over 900 programs successfully on the new machine configuration, these have all been commercial programs, mainly games. Public domain software hasn't been tested to any large extent for compatibility, and it is here where most problems occur.



Equipped with a new animated opening screen when it's turned on, the Amiga 500 Plus with its Kickstart 2.0 is obviously different from the older Amigas

Angry customers

Many PD libraries have experienced problems with the release of the A500 Plus. A large percentage of their software does not work on the new machine, and they have been getting calls from angry customers who can't get their programs to run. Brian Smith of Vally PD calls the situation "a disaster area".

"Some of the problems may be as simple as changing a bootblock or start-up sequence. But source code needs adapting for more advanced changes," he told *Public Domain*.

According to Essex Computer Systems, 90 per cent of picture-viewing software won't work on the new Amiga, nor will any of the software emulators that are available.

As far as some PD libraries are concerned, profit margins are made even slimmer if customers have to return disks that won't run. On top of that, until the libraries buy the machines the incompatibility problems will remain a problem as they won't be rectified.

Lost forever

Many libraries are organising lists of programs that aren't compatible but this will a while. "The machine's great and we can we can expect great things in the future, but some software we're going to lose forever," believes Brian

A500: the old versus the new

	A500	A500 Plus
Highest resolution:	640 x 512 pixels	1,280 x 1,024 pixels (with multi-sync monitor)
Workbench:	1.3.2	2.0
DOS supplied:	AmigaDOS 1.3.2	AmigaDOS 2.0
Operating system:	Kickstart 1.3	Kickstart 2.04
Memory (chip RAM):	512K	1Mb
Custom chips:	Agnus/Fat Agnus	Super Fat Agnus
	Denise	Super Denise

DOMAIN NEWS ➡➡➡PUBLIC DOMAIN NEWS ➡➡➡PUBLIC DO

FOR AMIGA 500 PLUS

Smith of Vally PD.

No compatibility problems will arise if the programmers of the software have adhered to a list of developers' guidelines laid down by Commodore over 18 months ago. But a lot of PD programmers, in their quest to get their best out of the Amiga, use non-standard techniques to achieve the theoretically impossible. Demos writers are the main culprits in this respect.

Games and utilities may be less affected, mainly because they don't always try to stretch the Amiga in the same way as demos. But once again, if programmers haven't 'followed the rules' then there could be problems.

All the indications so far show that the Amiga 500 Plus will be the base configuration of the Amiga family; the Amiga 1500 and 2000 models are also being upgraded to Kickstart 2.0 and Workbench 2.0. This means that if programs don't work, then a lot of new Amiga owners will be affected. Many commercial programs will be updated to be able to run on the new machines. Public domain software, written by individuals who don't necessarily have the funds to buy or the accessibility to one of these machines may not be able or bothered to issue updates to their programs.

What to do

If you have an Amiga 500 Plus and want to obtain and use public domain software, the only thing you can do if you want a program is to ask the person or library you get the program from if it will work on the machine. For owners of older Amiga 500s, there will be packages available for their computers to upgrade them to the new operating systems – both from Commodore and third parties. The price of these is expected to be less than £100 when they are made available in early 1992.

Bargain hunters look here

Those of you looking for an inexpensive stocking filler or a bigger present for Christmas should check out the All Formats Computer Fair.

Two more such fairs are going to be held this year, and they are conveniently placed on the calendar for those wanting to do some Christmas shopping. The dates and venues of the events are:

December 14; London – Horticultural Hall, Westminster.

December 15; Leeds – University Sports Centre.

Admission to the fairs costs £4, and the doors are open from 10am to 4 pm. For more information, to get advance tickets or to book a stand call John Riding on 0225

"Erm, excuse me. Could you tell me the way to the All Formats Computer Fair?"

Setting the standard – more PD associations

Following the announcement of the United Public Domain Suppliers (UPDS) association in the last issue of Public Domain, two further similar associations have been formed.

All formats alliance

Essex Computer Systems and Goldstar Computers have formed the Public Domain (and Shareware) Standards of Distribution (PSD) which is aimed at regulating the standards of service provided by public domain and shareware libraries.

Libraries that deal with software for more than one type of computer are supported by the scheme, and membership is entirely voluntary. Apart from the benefits of being associated with such an association, member libraries are also offered support from the Official Virus Research Centre UK to help with the detection and prevention of viruses.

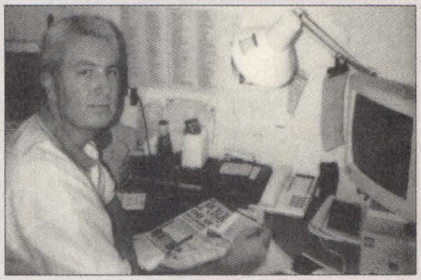
PSD will also be deregulating licenceware as much as possible. It will be trying to encourage programmers to distribute with PSD members, encouraging more shareware instead.

Anyone who orders software from a member of the association is guaranteed:

- Totally virus-free software.
- A phone that is manned – *not* an answerphone – for placing orders.
- A helpline available during working hours for problems with purchased software.
- Being able to pay for software by cheque or credit card, which implies the company has a credit rating.
- That there is no pornographic material available from the libraries.

If you are an established library that doesn't take credit card orders, contact the organisers as you may be able to join.

So far the response to the scheme has been good. Libraries currently involved are: Essex Computer Services, Goldstar Computers,



John Dudley of Essex Computer Systems, one of the co-organisers of the Public Domain Standards of Distribution association (PDS)

Déjà Vu, A Bit on the Side and Blitterchips.

The organisation is not competing with the United Public Domain Suppliers, in spite of similarities. "We've got a similar aim. We're hoping that all libraries that can join will. It's not a question of pushing small groups out – it's the opposite. If they can join they're welcome to," says John Dudley co-organiser of Essex Computer Systems.

As far as Amiga software is concerned, PDS has got the backing of Commodore which, "is keen to help in the quest to clean-up PD software".

For more information on the PDS contact **Essex Computer Systems on ☎ 0268 553963.**

ST libraries join forces

Another organisation has been formed by a group of libraries that sell ST public domain and shareware. Called The PD Confederation, this group of libraries intends to not only keep up the standard of ST PD software, but also to develop quality PD of its own. Its other aims include:

- To keep up the high standard of ST PD software
- To keep the prices of PD software as low as possible
- To instigate joint advertising from member libraries
- To attend all of the top computer shows
- To ensure that there is more contact between the libraries, programmers and end-users.

At present there are seven members of The PD Confederation: Jennix PD, Prophecy PD, Nightshift PD, PD ST, The Source, LAPD and Power PD.

For more information, contact:
Jennix PD: 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB.
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AC18 Freeway Ledgermaster v1.01 (4)
AC19 Freeway Payroll v8.6 (3)
AC21 Page Financial Controller v1.11 (2)
AC28 Noyes Financial Package (2)
AC30 Cheque It Out v1.1 (1)
AC31 Cheque Plus (2)
AC32 Business Letters (1)
AC35 Formgen v4.1a
AC37 EZ-Forms (1)
AC40 Fast Invoice Writer (1)
AC42 Investment Ledger v6.0 (1)
AC45 SISCPlus (Sales, Invoicing, Stock) (1)
AC49 Mr Bill
AC67 Easy Projects v4.02 (1)
AC55 Home Finance Manager (1)
AC59 Ultimate Sales Manager v4.00 (2)
AC60 Corporate Financial Analyst (2)
AC61 Salesman v2.1 (1)
AC62 Video Management SYS v3.5 (2)
AC64 Cassy (1)
AC65 Dlite v1.0 (1)
AC66 Prodev Quote v4.01 (1)
AC67 Market Finder & Minder (1)

Utilities

UT25 Professional Masterkey v3.20 (1)
UT50 PKZip & PKMenu v1.04 (1)
UT20 4 Dos v3.03
UT18 Automenu v4.7 (1)
UT16 Powermenu v5.3 (1)
UT17 Menu Direct Gold v3.0 (2)
UT19 Hard Disc Menu IV v4.00 (1)
UT21 Menu Commando II (1)
UT20 Treeview (1)
UT36 Powerbatch (1)
UT39 Turbo Copy v2.01 (1)
UT38 Executive Director v2.10 (1)
UT42 Virus Scanner (1)
UT43 Anti Virus Kit (2)
UT44 Back & Forth v1.71 (1)
UT49 Dos Toolbox & Marx Menu v2.27 (2)
UT50 Dos Help
UT55 Ultra Utilities v4.00 (1)
UT59 Flexibak Plus (1)

Database

DB04 Wampum v4.00 (2) UK Version
DB06 PC File v5.01 (3)
DB07 Zephyr Foxpro Clone v2.0 (2)
DB08 Catalist v3.27 (4) List Manager
DB09 SR-Info v3.41 (2)
DB10 File Express v5.00 (4)
DB11 Softbook
DB12 Information Please v2.07 (1)

Wordprocessing

WP08 Galaxy-Lite v1.7 (1)
WP09 PC Outline
WP10 PC Write Lite v1.03 (2)
WP11 PC Type+ v4.0 (4)
WP12 Black Magic v1.51 (3)
WP13 Mindreader v2.0 (1)
WP14 Rubicon Publisher v2.2c (2)
WP22 Hypershell v4.0 (3)
WP26 New York Word (1)
WP29 Jorj Dictionary (1)
WP31 Thesaur Plus (1)
WP49 Fontastic (1)
WP55 European Multi Lingiual WP (3)
WP59 HyperPAD v2.2 (5)
WP75 Word Fugue v2.00c (2)
WP77 Bradford (1)
WP90 WP for Kids (1)
WP91 CV Master

Educational

ED02 PC Tutor (1)
ED03 Tutor Dos (4)
ED04 GCSE Physics/Computer Science/ Mathematics/Chemistry (3)
ED05 German/Spanish/Italian/Japanese & French Tutor (4)
ED06 IQ Builder (1)
ED07 World Atlas (1)
ED08 Kids Graphic Prog. (1)
ED09 Childrens Ed. Games (4-8 Yr Olds) (2)
ED10 Computer Tutor (1)
ED11 Amy's First Primer v2.2 (1) For Kids
ED12 Spelling Tutor (1)
ED13 Play 'N' Learn (1)
ED14 Spanish for Travellers (1)
ED15 Funnels & Buckets v2.00 (1)

Programming & Languages

PL06 A86 & D86 (1)
PL09 C Tutorial (1)
PL11 Pascal (1)
PL13 Turbo C Tutor (2)
PL15 Modula 2 Compiler (3) v2.0
PL17 Power Basic Support ST (5)
PL19 Chasm (1)

Spreadsheets

SS09 As Easy As v4.0s (1)
SS13 Qubecalc v3.01 (2)
SS14 PC-Calc+ v2.0 (3)
SS16 Instacalc v3.0 (1)
SS18 Pivot v2.0 (1)
SS19 Turbo Calc v9.01 (1)
SS20 Alite v1.0b (1)
SS21 Express Calc v4.10 (2)
SS23 Grab Plus v6.0 (2)
SS25 Free Calc v2.0 (1)
SS26 Lotus 123 Utilities (1)

Graphics & Art

GP03 Dancad 3D v2.00 (2)
GP04 Optiks (1)
GP05 Tsquare (4)
GP06 VGA Paint (1)
GP07 Clip Art Pack (6)
GP08 Droege (2)
GP09 PC-Key Draw (3)
GP10 PC Draft (1)
GP11 Desk Top Paint (2)
GP12 Fractal Designer v3.08 (1)

Windows

WI23 Icon Manager
WI24 Metz Windows Utilities
WI25 Almanac for Windows
WI29 Winedit v1.1 Test Editor
WI30 Winpost v3.0b
WI33 85 Games for Windows
WI34 Paintshop for Win v2.02
WI35 Command Post v7.0s
WI36 Wincheck v2.2a

Communication

CM10 Odyssey v1.42 (1)
CM11 PC Comm+ UK Version (1)
CM12 Telix v3.15c (3)
CM13 Wildcat BBS System (2)
CM15 Fido (1)
CM16 PC Ham v5.32 (1)
CM17 Auto Sig Compserve v6.3a
CM18 GT Power v16.00 (4)

Special Interests (Hobbies)

SI42 Crossword Creator v4.3 (1)
SI43 Crossword Solver (1)
SI44 Crystal Ball v3.0 (1)
SI45 Managing your Food v3.61 (1)
SI46 Astrology/Horoscopes (1)
SI47 Football Forecaster (1)
SI48 Handwriting Analyst (1)
SI49 Diet Aid (2)
SI50 Bible (7)
SI51 Family Ties v1.15 (1)
SI52 HAM Radio (4)
SI53 Pianoman (1)
SI54 Stock Options & Trader (1)
SI55 Wedding Organiser (1)
SI56 Weight Control (1)

Desk Top Tools

DT01 Early Bird v1.0e (1)
DT02 Personal Calendar v2.1 (1)
DT03 PC Desksteam v2.01 (1)
DT04 The Ultimate Diary (1)
DT05 Alt v1.16s (1)

Music

MS25 Sequencer Plus (2)
MS26 Music Maestro (1)
MS27 Melody Master v1.6 (1)
MS28 Musicians Toolbox (1)

Science & Engineering

SE02 Bigcalc (1)
SE03 Diff (1)
SE04 Aciran (1)
SE05 RMS Survey Utilities (1)
SE06 PC Model (1)
SE07 Kinetics (1)

Games

GM02 Arcade Games (4)
GM03 Black Jack v2.20d (1)
GM04 Ford Simulator II (1)
GM05 PC Chess (1)
GM06 PC Monopoly UK Version (1)
GM07 Dracula in London (1)
GM08 Captain Comic v3.00 (1)
GM09 Jacaranda Jim Adventure v2.23 (1)

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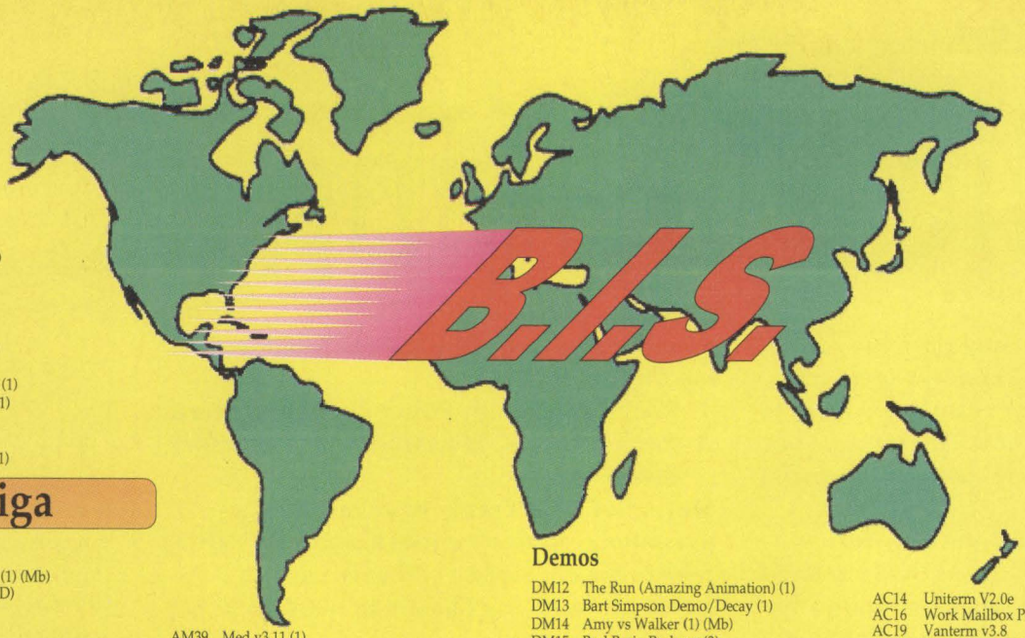

GM10 Pharoh's Tomb (1)
GM11 The Soccer Game (1)
GM12 PC Golf (1)
GM13 Sex Monopoly (1)
GM14 Block Out (1)
GM15 Joystick Games (1)
GM16 Shooting Gallery (1)
GM17 Scramble v1.00 (1)
GM18 VGA Concentration (1)
GM19 Power Chess v4.46 (1)
GM20 Goal v1.0 (1)
GM21 Kung Fu Louis (3)
GM22 Business Strategist (1)

Amiga

Games

AG02 Star Trek (Strategic) (1) (Mb)
AG04 Star Trek (3) (Mb) (2D)
AG05 Pacman 87 (1)
AG07 Tennis (1) (Mb)
AG09 Rings of Zon (1)
AG11 Golden Fleece (Adventure) (1)
AG12 Flashbier (Arcade) (1)
AG13 Pseudo Cop (Arcade) (1)
AG14 2 Player Soccer League (1)
AG15 Chess (Brilliant Graphics) (1)
AG16 Treasure Hunt (1)
AG17 Eat Mine (Mine Game) (1)
AG18 Pipeline (1)
AG19 Property Market (Trading Game) (1)
AG20 Bip (2 Player Arcade Game) (1)
AG21 Quiz Master 2 (1)
AG22 Drip (Arcade Game) (1) (Mb)
AG23 Breakout Construction Set (1)
AG24 Frantic Freddy (1)
AG25 Megaball (1) (Mb)
AG26 Seven Tiles (Speedball Game) (1)
AG27 Wheel of Fortune (Based on TV Game) (1)
AG28 Casino Games (2)
AG29 Castle of Doom (Adventure) (1)

Music

AM01 Simpsons Do the Bartman (3)
AM02 808 State Remix (1)
AM03 Pet Shop Boys (1)
AM04 100 C64 Tunes (1)
AM05 Betty Boo (2)
AM06 Technotronic Mega Mix (1)
AM07 Madonna Hanky Panky (1)
AM08 Sound Tracker Set (10)
AM09 Sound of Silents (1)
AM11 C Bit 90 Excellent (1)
AM12 Noise Tracker (1)
AM13 Kylie Minogue (2)
AM14 Sydney Young Blood (1)
AM17 Don't Miss the Party Line (1)
AM18 Digital Concert 3 & 6 (2)
AM20 18 Wicked Tunes (1)
AM21 Games Music Creator (1)
AM22 Pro Tracker 1.1a Music Editor (2)
AM25 Future Composer (1)
AM39 Med v3.11 (1)

Utilities

PU12 Word Wright & Spell Checker (1)
PU14 S.I.D. v1.6 (1)
PU15 Uedit W.P. (1)
PU16 Jazz Bench (1)
PU17 Quick Base (1)
PU18 Spectrum Emulator (1)
PU19 International Utility Disk Set (8) 30+ Progs
PU26 Textplus 2.2 (W.P.)
PU27 Amiga M CAD (1)
PU31 R.I.M. (Great Database) (1)
PU32 Amibase (Database) (1)
PU33 Flexbase (Simple Database) (1)
PU42 Visicalc (Spreadsheet) (1)
PU45 Master Virus Killer v2.1 Kills 124 Viruses (1)
PU46 Bank'n (Finance Package) (1)
PU48 Messy Dos Transfer PC Files (1)
PU49 IFF Fonts and Surfaces for DTP (1)
PU53 Label Printer (1)
PU56 D-Copy (Back up Protected Disks) (1)
PU57 C Manual (3)
PU58 Emulators/C64 & Atari ST (1)
PU59 Music Utilities (1)
PU60 NComm 1.92 (1)
PU62 Avoiding CLI (1)
PU63 Icon Manager (2)
PU64 Clip Art for DTP (1)
PU69 Fletcher Font Pack (10)

Educational

AE03 Educational Graphics
AE05 World Data Bank (1) (+11)
AE07 Spellquiz (1) (+5)
AE09 Blackboard Maths (1) (+5)
AE10 Amiga Educational Pack (4) (+5)
AE11 Learn and Play 1 & 2 (2)
AE12 Maths Calculator (1)
AE13 DV10 Spelling Game (1)

Demos

DM12 The Run (Amazing Animation) (1)
DM13 Bart Simpson Demo/Decay (1)
DM14 Amy vs Walker (1) (Mb)
DM15 Bud Brain Package (3)
DM16 Walker Package (3) (Mb)
DM20 New Tec Demo (2)
DM21 System Violation (1)
DM24 Kefrens Megademo (2)
DM25 Elvira Demo (1)
DM27 RAF Mega Demo (2)
DM29 Predator & Robocop Demo (3)
DM30 Red Sector Demo (1)
DM35 Batman the Movie (1) (Mb)
DM37 Digital Concert 1-6 (3)
DM39 Rebels Megademo (1)
DM40 Phenomina Demo (1)
DM41 Virtual Worlds (1)

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ST

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AS06 Air Warrior
AS07 Robo 12
AS08 England Manager
AS09 Bermuda Race 2
AS10 Floyd the Droid
AS11 Pool Roulette
AS16 Snakes & Ladders (Mb)
AS19 Flight Simulator
AS21 Adventures Pack from £5.00
AS24 Arcade Packs from £5.00
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Communications

AC09 Magterm 2 Lite v3.3
AC14 Uniterm V2.0e
AC16 Work Mailbox Program
AC19 Vanterm v3.8
AC21 Pac-et-Term v3.3a

Utilities

AU43 Postcopy 3
AU44 Super Boot v7.0 Brilliant (D/Sided)
AU47 New Atari Control Panel
AU48 Home Accounts
AU49 Vault Hard Disk Backup Utility
AU50 Astrocalc
AU51 Super V Killer
AU53 Gem Plus
AU57 Pic Switch

Word Processors

AW12 ST Writer Elite v4.01
AW15 Calamus Package of Fonts (4)
AW19 Atex WP Package (6)
AW21 1st Word
AW24 ST Folding Editor
AW26 Pro-Format
AW27 Magnwriter
AW29 WP Utilities

Educational

AE04 Kid Publisher
AE09 The Body Shop
AE11 Geography Tutor
AE13 Typing Tutor
AE16 Kidgraph, Kidmusic, Kidpiano for 2-5 yrs old
AE17 Kidshapes 2
AE18 GCSE Programs
AE19 Spelling
AE20 Shipwreck

Music

AM09 Music Writer
AM11 Composer
AM13 City Sounds
AM15 Accompanist
AM16 Synth 50
AM17 Sampler Converter

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Public Speaking

What is it that really riles you about the computer industry? Is there something that you simply have to get off your chest? Or perhaps you just want to ask a simple question in a calm and civilised manner.

The letters page is the place for forum, debate and discussuion on all things related to PD and shareware – however tenuously.

Send your points of veiw, questions, 20 pound notes to me, the Editor. You'll find me at:

Public Speaking, *Public Domain*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

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S Parmar
Wolverhampton

Longing to learn

After reading through your terrific first issue of *Public Domain* I felt that I must congratulate you on producing top quality magazine full of informative articles and excellent reviews of all types of public domain software.

My only disappointment was that there were no articles on producing PD software. Looking through your magazine I was amazed by the type of software that can be produced at home. Therefore I would be very grateful if you could tell me if any PD software is available for the Amiga which is simple to use and will show me how to produce good quality PD software.

ED: Producing the majority of programs in the public domain does require a degree of programming knowledge. However, there are packages available – both public domain and commercially – that make producing PD programs easier.

For instance, these commercial packages are aimed at making games easy to produce: *Amos* – a games orientated version of BASIC; *SEUCK* – for shoot-'em-ups; *3D Construction Kit* – 3D 'freescape' games a designer.

Animations and demos can also be produced fairly easily – check out the *Red Sector Demo Maker* if that's where your interests lie.

We intend to cover PD programs that make producing your own PD easily. But on the whole, a degree of technical knowledge is required.

John Fisher
Essex

Mah Jong

Is there a PD program equivalent of Mah Jong? I have it on my Sega, but would like to know if there's a version available for the Amiga.

ED: *China Challenge* is an Amiga version of Mah Jong. It's available from Capricorn Computers on disk 587. Capricorn live at: 35 Warick Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands B92 7HS. Give 'em a buzz on 021 707 0381.

N Hewlett
Langley

I want to be a librarian

Please tell me what I would need to go about setting up and running my own PD library. I think they are a brilliant idea – I particularly like the idea of distributing software for such a fair price.

I am the owner of an Amiga A500 with a 1 Meg of memory. Will this be necessary for the work involved or will I have to have more memory? What kind of outlay do I need to start with? What kind of software and hardware will I need?

ED: You should think long and hard before setting up a public domain library. It's a very demanding and time-consuming pastime, so you'll have to committed. Spookily enough, we have an article on doing just what what you're thinking of doing this issue – check it out on page 88. It's written by Paul Ciupek, head honcho of the NBS library, so he really knows what he's talking about. If you do decide to go ahead, then the best of luck!

Gary Lord
Durham

We want more!

It was great to read a magazine devoted to the public domain and other low-cost software. As I'm still at school I only have my pocket money to spend on software for my ST. I find that I can get PD games that are every bit as good, if not more so, than if I spent £30 on some rubbish movie licence.

There again, I have bought some real duffers in the past, so it's good to be able to read reviews to tell me what's best to buy. The only problem is there aren't enough reviews! I've bought everything I wanted from your magazine long before the second issue is due.

Two months is too long! Will *Public Domain* ever be published monthly as all the other magazines I read are?

ED: Oh, go on then. Just for you, Gary, we'll go monthly from this issue!

Actually, it became apparent quite early on that there was enough interest out there for us to go monthly. So this, after just one issue, is the first of the monthly issues. Hopefully we'll be able to satisfy your appetite for PD software!

And thanks to all our readers for making all this possible so soon. It means twice as much work for us, though!

Rick Sutcliffe
Crazy Diamond PD
Sudbury

Small is beautiful

Many congratulations on a very good first issue of your magazine. It is about time that public domain was given a boost in the eye of the public, and I think your magazine will do the job superbly.

I would like to raise a point about the libraries that are forming the United Public Domain Suppliers (UPDS). While I agree whole-heartedly with, "giving PD purchasers peace of mind", I cannot help but feel that their actions are not 100 per cent with the customer in mind.

The area that concerns me is that a library can only join if they are VAT registered – this means that a library must have a turnover of at least £28,000 per annum. There are many small 'back-bedroom' libraries who give excellent service to the customer, but would be lucky to turn over £2,000 a year. I may sound like a cynic, but this alliance sounds little more than a way of forcing the small libraries out of business, by making the customers distrustful of libraries who do not belong (or do not meet the criteria). Perhaps it's because the little guys usually undercut the big guys. Who knows...?

My own ST PD library will never achieve UPDS membership, purely on the grounds of turnover. This does *not* mean that I am not to be trusted – I have yet to have a single letter or phone call of complaint. A quality service is what counts, not some flashy letters after your name.

My advice to PD buyers is to find a library you can trust and stick with it.

ED: With so many established libraries around, it's no wonder competition is fierce. There have been cases of libraries folding owing customers money. But this is not only restricted to the smaller libraries – just look at the well-established MPH library which went into receivership recently (see the news pages).

Since we reported on the UPDS, a couple of

other PD-governing organisations have sprung up. The criteria that PD libraries need to meet to attain membership varies between all three.

Is there room for all these different organisations? Is there any call for a library-governing body at all? Are these well-meaning organisations unwittingly going to squeeze the smaller libraries out of business? (Or could this indeed be a deliberate strategy?) Let's hear your views!

Kevin Wolley
Ramoyle

Programmers' world

I'm probably not your typical reader – I use my ST almost entirely for programming with a little word processing and DTP thrown in as required. Anyway, for what it's worth the following might be worth a look at:

Why not include Macintosh PD? There must be plenty of Classic owners out there who don't want to pay £500 for Aldus Macsinging software.

How about a PD programmers' column? Nice first article, but why not develop it? One of the German mags runs a regular 'PD programmers' profile' column, a sort of interview/review of work/profile article on one particular programmer. I'd love to know what makes Jeff Minter tick!

I would argue that a fair proportion of your readers either program, or would like to program, public domain software. How about an advanced programming column, along the lines of how to design your program, what your interface should look like. One recurrent problem with PD/shareware seems to be that it's written 'on the fly' and not designed. This shows in the end product, and is the difference between the dross and quality software. Maybe you could shape the way PD goes in future!

ED: We have no plans to cover Mac PD and shareware at the moment (though we use them daily and love the machines dearly). Most Macs are still used for professional applications rather than by the home user, the market at which *Public Domain* is aimed. The introduction of the Classic may introduce the friendliest computer to the home, so as for the future – who knows? A 'how to' series on creating PD programs is a good idea, and one we've been considering. Stay tuned for further developments...

L Rigden
Faversham

The hard stuff

Well, it's about time too! Being a considerable user of public domain software for some years, I have often wondered why there wasn't a magazine devoted to the subject. Much to my pleasant surprise, I saw the advert for this magazine in your sister publication, *ST Format*. Off I trundled to my local newsagent for what I honestly expected to be a run of the mill catalogue. What a shock!

Public Domain is simply superb. A quality magazine with reviews in depth on all the latest software. Although I am an ST user, this magazine offers so much more for the main three formats, scrimping on nothing. Keep up the good work.

How about a series on PD software for specific hardware uses, ie, the best items for users of printers, hard drives modems etc.

ED: It's our policy to give the software we review the full treatment. They're written by independent, professional writers who've all had experience reviewing full-priced products before. Rest assured: you can trust our reviews!

We intend to keep on covering hardware – it's of interest to anybody who has a computer regardless of the type of software they use – be it public domain or commercial software.

We may well do a round-up of PD and shareware that is designed to work with specific types of hardware in the future. Keep reading – there's plenty more in store!

J Sumner
Ilfracombe

A different issue

I think I must be cracking up! I saw your advert for your new magazine *Public Domain* in your weekly mag *New Computer Express*. The picture on the front page showed 'Issue 1 – November/December 1991', but when a friend brought me a copy back from the newsagents it had a completely different front cover.

The reason I am writing is because the photo of the front cover in *NCE* showed a utility for the ST called *Printertrix*. I particularly wanted this program and was most disappointed when it was not on the cover disk. Is there any chance you may be able to provide this for me?

I am impressed with the content of your first issue and am considering instructing my newsagent to reserve me a copy each month. Keep up the standard, but please, stop confusing me!

ED: Ah, it's like this... The adverts for *Public Domain* were needed long before the magazine itself was produced. We only had some idea as to the magazine content and absolutely no idea what we were going to put on disk!

The cover that appeared in the ads was only ever intended as a mock-up, designed to give an idea of what the real thing would look like. It certainly was never intended to mislead anybody.

The programs selected for 'inclusion' on the dummy disk, were a completely random choice – indeed, some of them are made up names, as is the case with *Printertrix*. Sorry for any confusion caused!

Elizabeth Lamont
King Rollo Films
Devon

As if by magic

In answer to the request for an up-date on *Mr Benn*'s whereabouts and activities in the review of the *Mr Benn* demo (page 82, issue 1), we are delighted to report that, nearly 21 years since he first appeared on our TV screens, the *Mr Benn* series is shown regularly on BE King Rollo Film creators of anc copyright holders of *Mr Benn* is currently involved in negotiations regarding a new live-action *Mr Benn* TV series and a full-length feature film.

Mr Benn videos are available on the Virgin Vision label and plans for a *Mr Benn* publishing program, a range of *Mr Benn* clothing and toys (including computer games!) are well underway – so watch out for *Mr Benn*'s 21st Anniversary celebrations.

Oops, must go, here comes the shopkeeper...

ED: We're all keen *Mr Benn* fans in the *Public Domain* office (apart from Tim who comes from New Zealand – they haven't invented televisions out there yet), and are glad to hear that our childhood hero is making a comeback. What exciting adventures do we have in store this time round? Has the series been brought up-to-date with The French Maid, The Naughty Nurse and the Traffic Warden? We'll be looking forward to a weekly visit to 52 Festive road once again! PD

Help! • Help! • Help! • Help! • Help! • Help! • Help!

Having trouble with a piece of public domain or shareware software? Can't find exactly what you need? We may be able to help! Starting from next issue, we'll be running a new section aimed at sorting out all those technical troubles.

If there's a particular program is perplexing you or you know what you want but just can't find the program to do it, just drop a line to our Help pages and resident technical editor Tim Howell will do his damnedest to sort out your strife.

And if your problem is too tough for Tim, then we'll be printing open letters for others to answer – we just know that you're all kind-hearted souls who would give up their bus seat to an old lady without a second thought, have a place for every waif and stray and would adopt a pleasant attitude to Jeremy Beadle.

So, don't be shy. There's no need to feel daft or silly or a complete dunderhead who'd have trouble finding their way round Sainsbury's car park. Send your queries to:

Help! *Public Domain*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

Programming & Utilities

Fed up with your ST's interface? Want to run a bulletin board from your PC? Need to debug your AmigaBASIC program? Then it's time to get down to some serious computing. Jason Holborn can tell you the most wallet-friendly way to achieve these feats and much, much more...

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The Boss(Shareware)

PC • Advantage Shareware
56 Bath Road, Cheltenham,
Glos GL53 7HJ☎ 0242 224340

Attention all C programmers! This one is definitely for you. If you develop applications in C, and would like to produce programs that look as good as *Dbase III*, *Lotus 1-2-3* and *Framework* but you feel daunted by the amount of work necessary to achieve this, then *The Boss* is the solution.

The Boss is a powerful and effective set of library functions for C programmers which lets you implement pop-up windows, pull-down menus, status lines, and in-context on-line help functions in your own C programs, and it's all so easy.

It also enables you to write applications in which you can drag windows around the screen and which will automatically sense what video card is installed, and then drive it quickly and flicker-free. Simply by making the correct library calls, all the hard work is handled for you.

Also included is *The Data Clerk* which handles many of the tasks associated with data entry – fetching a single line of text, co-ordinating the filling out of a form, etc. It can also validate the entered information.

The library supports PC/MSDOS

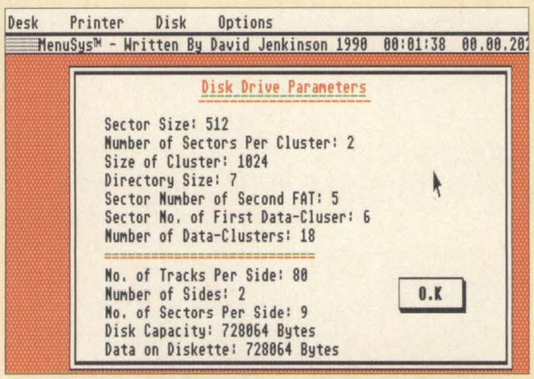
What's on the Atari menu tonight?

MenuSys (PD)

ST • Dirty Half Dozen Disk 6 •
Arrow PD, 6 Kents Orchard,
Perry Street, South Chard,
Somerset TA20 2QB

The ST's GEM desktop environment is powerful enough for most users, but it has its limitations. *MenuSys* is a program designed to address this problem, enabling you to carry out desktop-like operations with far greater control over the mechanics involved.

At its simplest level, *MenuSys* is a disk utility program that simplifies such operations as formatting, copying and wiping disks. You can also carry out operations on individual files and folders such as the deletion and creation of folders, renaming, copying and deleting of individual files plus a lot more besides.


Desk Printer Disk Options
MenuSys™ - Written By David Jenkinson 1990 00:01:38 00.00.20
Disk Drive Parameters
Sector Size: 512
Number of Sectors Per Cluster: 2
Size of Cluster: 1024
Directory Size: 7
Sector Number of Second FAT: 5
Sector No. of First Data-Cluser: 6
Number of Data-Clusters: 18
No. of Tracks Per Side: 80
Number of Sides: 2
No. of Sectors Per Side: 9
Disk Capacity: 728064 Bytes
Data on Diskette: 728064 Bytes
O.K

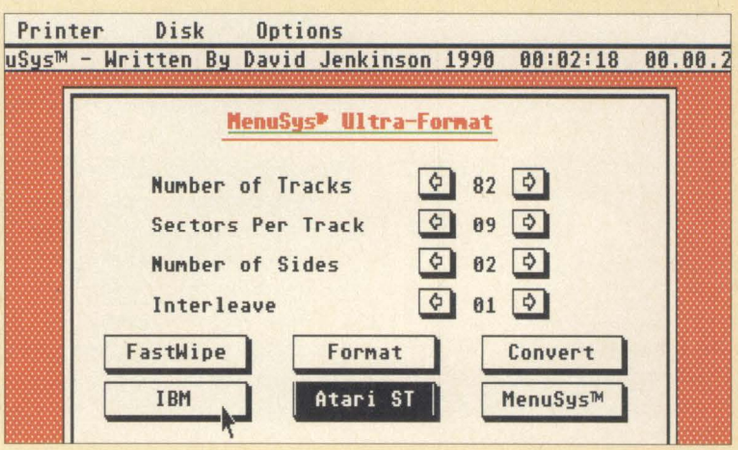
Analyse your disks with *MenuSys'* powerful disk structure facility

For the more technical among you, it will also display files in a variety of different formats including the obligatory Hex and ASCII, plus decimal and even binary. I'm not sure how useful a binary dump of a file is, but the facility is there for those of you who like that sort of thing.

What makes *MenuSys* so useful is the amount of control it gives you over operations. In the case of the disk formatter, you have extensive control over virtually every formatting parameter including the number of tracks, sectors and interleaving. Clever use of these parameters enables you to format disks to a far higher capacity than the ST's standard 720K.

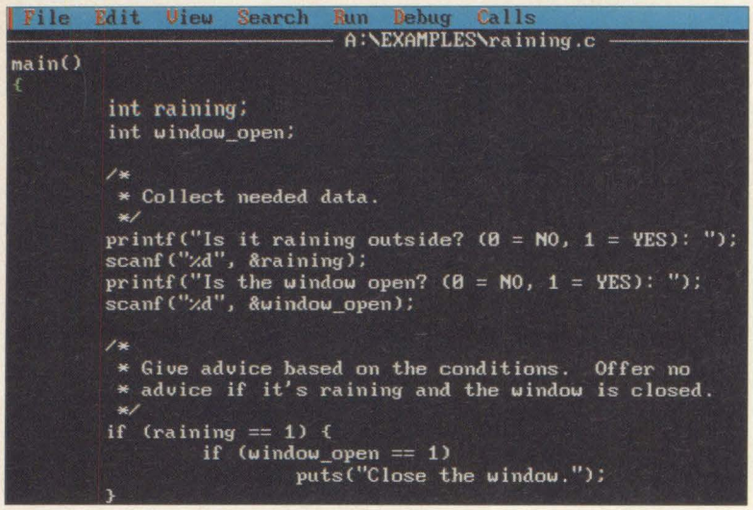
All this power is accessible from a nice friendly GEM-based front end that is a pleasure to use. In fact, the only gripe that I could find is that the program doesn't come with any form of documentation, therefore leaving you in the dark when it comes to the program's more powerful features.

MenuSys has something to offer most ST users. Worth checking out.



***MenuSys'* disk formatter is particularly powerful, enabling you to control formatting parameters such as the number of tracks, sectors per track and a lot more besides**

ST 75%



Jazz up your C programs with *The Boss*, a handy library of C-related routines which enable your programs to take advantage of pull-down menus, status bars and all the other whizzy elements that are essential elements of the modern user-friendly, idiot-proof program

for the IBM PC/XT/AT, PS/2 and compatibles. But you'll need one of the following compilers to take advantage of the state-of-the-art techniques that *The BOSS* offers: Watcom C & Express C, TopSpeed C Microsoft C & Quick C, Borland Turbo C & C++ Computer Innovations CI86, Datalight C Mix Power C, ZortechC++ and Aztec C. You'll also need the Microsoft Assembler (MASM) to assemble any local changes to the assembler source.

The Boss is a very useful set of utilities for the C programmer, which should take a lot of the drudgery out of creating snappy-looking programs. It enables you to concentrate on the guts of the application, so that hopefully you can come up with attractive programs that actually work. The manual is extremely thorough, giving you program examples as it goes. I like it, and I'll be using it the next time I'm writing applications in C.

PC **78%**

Eliza (PD)

ST • Dirty Half Dozen Disk 6 • Arrow PD, 6 Kents Orchard, Perry Street, South Chard, Somerset TA20 2QB

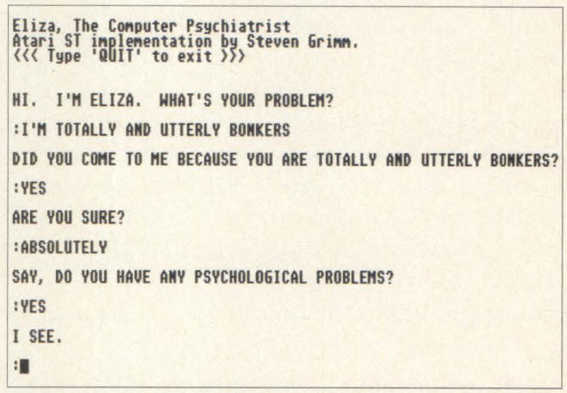
Computers can be a lot of fun, but they can never hope to replace good old human company. Your ST may be able to crunch large numbers, paint pretty pictures and play Mozart backwards, but try sitting by the fireside with it discussing the weather, politics and what the hell was going on in the last episode of *Dallas* and it'll be totally stumped. Let's face it, computers haven't quite grasped the art of intelligent conversation (then again, neither have most humans!)

Eliza is an attempt to bring a little intelligence to your ST by giving it the power to hold conversations. These aren't the kind you'd hold down the local pub, though – instead, *Eliza* attempts to act as a sort of computer psychiatrist by asking you appropriate (and very extremely annoying) questions in response to your answers.

On the whole, the standard of intelligence isn't bad, but it's still all too easy to get the computer mixed up, often resulting in some quite baffling responses from the computer. It's a little like talking to a drunk French man at times, but without the horrible smell of garlic.

Eliza is by no means the first step towards true artificial intelligence on your ST, but it's fun nevertheless. If the thought of holding a conversation with your ST appeals to you, then you may

cont. on p18



"Tell me about your childhood." Let your ST patronise you with a copy of *Eliza*, the computer-based psychiatrist program

Have you got MIDI misery? Trying to run two tasks together? Here's a fishy solution...

MIDI Library 2.0 (PD)

AMIGA • Fish 227 • George Thompson Services, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB
☎ 0707 664654

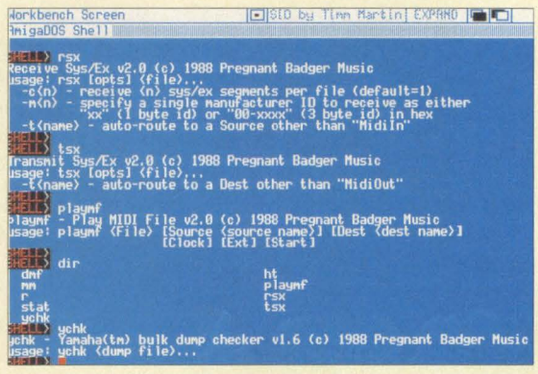
If you've ever wanted to write your own MIDI applications, then Fish disk 227 should be at the top of your shopping list. Put simply, it contains a disk-based library of routines which take the drudgery out of programming MIDI-compatible applications such as sequencers, patch editors and libraries.

Thanks to a healthy selection of 'include' files, the MIDI library can be used from just about any programming language including C, Assembler and even humble BASIC. The MIDI library provides multi-tasking access to MIDI resources such as the serial port.

The library is based on a 'copying' message system so that a single message sent in can cause several messages to be sent back out. Included as part of the library are tasks that convert serial I/O to MIDI messages which can be sent to any task that cares to listen. This provides for unlimited sharing of the serial port by MIDI applications.

The advantages of such a system in a multi-tasking environment are enormous. Without this sort of interface, two tasks trying to receive MIDI data from the serial port at the same time will cause a mutual foul-up. Neither will get all the data it seeks. By using the *MIDI Library* this problem is eliminated because there is only one task actually receiving data from the serial port. Data is then distributed to everything that's waiting for it.

A similar problem occurs with transmitting. This is because MIDI is based on a message system. Each message contains a certain number of bytes and must be received intact for the receiver to make sense of it. If two tasks try to transmit data to the serial port at the same time it is likely that the partial messages from each stream will merge, the receiver will get a garbled message and the results will be disastrous. The MIDI library handles this by keeping messages intact, and again only one task is actually sending data to the serial port.


Workbench Screen
SID by Tinn Martin EXPAND
AmigaDOS Shell
1.SHELL> rsx
Receive Sys/Ex v2.0 (c) 1988 Pregnant Badger Music
usage: rsx [opts] (file)...
-c(n) - receive (n) sys/ex segments per file (default=1)
-m(n) - specify a single manufacturer ID to receive as either
"xx" (1 byte id) or "00-xxxx" (3 byte id) in hex
-t(name) - auto-route to a Source other than "Midiin"
2.SHELL> tsx
Transmit Sys/Ex v2.0 (c) 1988 Pregnant Badger Music
usage: tsx [opts] (file)...
-t(name) - auto-route to a Dest other than "MidiOut"
3.SHELL> playmf
playmf - Play MIDI File v2.0 (c) 1988 Pregnant Badger Music
usage: playmf (File) [Source (source name)] [Dest (dest name)]
[Clock] [Ext] [Start]
4.SHELL> dir
dmf
mm
r
stat
ychk
ht
playmf
rsx
tsx
5.SHELL> ychk
ychk - Yamaha(tm) bulk dump checker v1.6 (c) 1988 Pregnant Badger Music
usage: ychk (dump file)...
6.SHELL>

If you've ever dreamt of writing your own MIDI programs, then the *MIDI Library* provides you with the tools to make that dream come true

Here's a rundown of some of the library's main features:

- Unlimited MIDI message merging – provides an interface for multiple MIDI applications to access the serial port without conflict.
- Versatile MIDI filtering – including message, channel, controller and SysEx ID number filtering.
- Exists as a standard disk-based Amiga library less than 10K in size.
- Supports the full MIDI message specification including system exclusive, three byte SysEx ID's, and MTC.
- Transfers MIDI packets using the *Amiga Executive* message system.
- Entirely written in Assembly language.

The disk also contains a number of useful MIDI utilities that serve as a fine example of the MIDI library in action. These range from SysEx managers to a MIDI monitor.

A disk that no musically-inclined programmer should be without it.

AMIGA **80%**

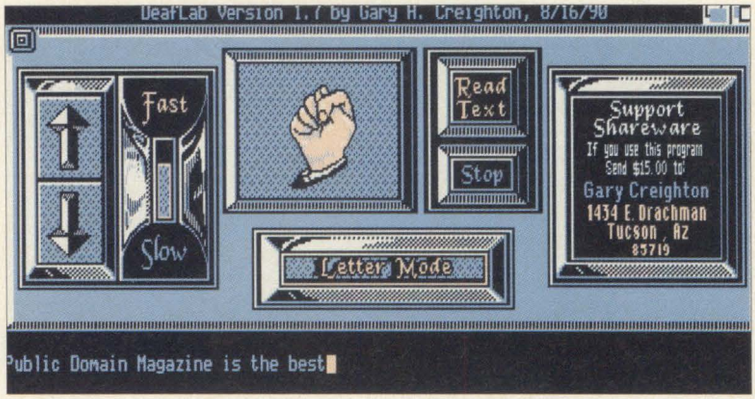
cont. from p17

well want to check this program out. Personally, I'll stick to talking to myself (I get more sense that way!)

ST 65%

DeafLab (Shareware)

Amiga • Fish Disk 494 • George Thompson Services, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654



Talk in sign language without having to learn the signs thanks to Gary Creighton's *DeafLab* utility. Unfortunately this version can only handle characters, not whole words, but it's still very good

If you have a friend who is either hard of hearing or even completely deaf, then *DeafLab* could well be the program for you. It's a well-presented tool which enables you to convert text to sign language.

Written by a very clever chap who answers to the name of Gary Creighton, *DeafLab* was designed to act as a hand-signing interface for the deaf community. It enables a deaf person to understand in sign language what someone is saying even if the speaker does not know how to sign.

You might be surprised to know how many people in the deaf community can read signs perfectly, but have trouble with letters.

DeafLab is also designed to act as a teaching tool for both people with hearing impediments who have never learned how to handsign (possibly because it was frowned upon in years past) and people without hearing difficulties who just want to learn how to do it.

The program presents the user with a graphic representation of a pair of hands which carry out the appropriate hand signals. At the bottom of the screen is a blank panel which is used as your interface with the program.

The current release only enables you to type directly into the program using the keyboard, but the author plans to upgrade the program soon to enables it to hand sign text files.

One limitation of the program is that it does not recognise whole words. Instead, it simply signs each character in the word, so something like 'dog' would produce three hand signs. In reality, such words could be presented much more simply with a single sign to represents the word 'dog'. I'm no sign language expert, but even I can see that this is possibly a big limitation.

DeafLab is a brilliant idea which must surely be encouraged. Programs of this type can only do good, so if you do purchase it, I urge you to pay the shareware contribution fee to encourage the author to continue development. The current release is a little limited admittedly, but if it was taken a stage further, it would quite simply be a revolutionary piece of software. Carry on coding, Gary.

AMIGA 85%

How to get your screen looking just the way you want

ScreenMod (PD)

AMIGA • TBAG 58 • 17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX

Here's a real gem of a program that borrows more than a few tricks from Steve Tibbet's *ScreenX*, another very fine PD utility.

It's a fairly simple program that enables you to alter the attributes of any screen that runs under Intuition – the system which makes sure that Amiga programs have a similar look and feel in terms of menus, windows, etc – including those opened by other programs.

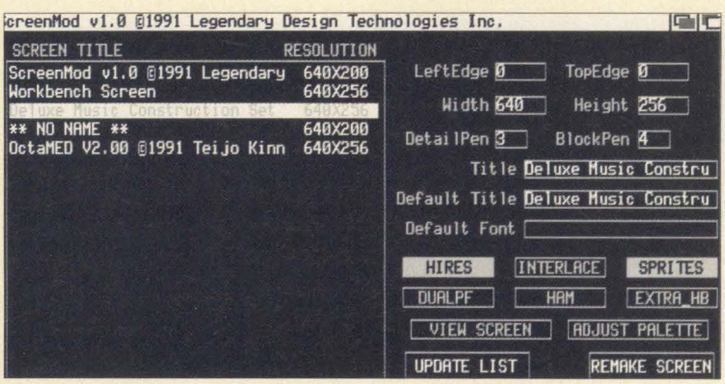
Like *ScreenX*, the program displays a list of all screens currently open under Intuition. Simply by clicking on one of the entries on this list, you can then alter various screen attributes including its dimensions (width, height, position), mode (interlaced or not, resolution, number of colours, colour palette) and a few more besides. Once you've set these attributes to your liking, a single click on the 'Remake Screen' gadget alters the screen instantly.

One thing that *ScreenMod* can't do is to permanently alter the screen attributes of a particular program. If you exit from a program that has been modified by *ScreenMod* and then reload it, the program returns to its original settings. However, *ScreenMod* does provide a way of getting around this limitation thanks to a second little CLI-based utility called *ScreenSet*. So, for example, if you had a program installed on your hard disk that is automatically loaded during boot-up (*SID*, for example), *ScreenSet* will enable you to automatically have the program's screen attributes altered from the start-up sequence.

This is achieved by first setting the attributes in *ScreenMod* and then saving them out to disk using the program's 'save settings' option. *ScreenSet* then takes this file and modifies any programs mentioned within the file if they are currently loaded.

ScreenSet is a little limited in its scope, but it's a useful tool nevertheless. I would have liked to have seen some facility for saving screens out in IFF format. If this had been included, *ScreenMod* would be a serious competitor for that other great screen manipulator, *ScreenX*.

AMIGA 82%

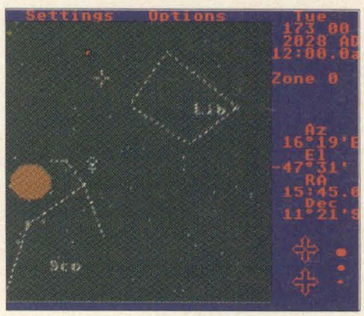


***ScreenMod* allows you to alter the attributes of any screen opened under Intuition. You can change the screen's resolution, size, type and colour palette**

Planetarium (PD)

ST • UTL16SE • Paradise Computers 9 Westfield Crescent, Brighton, BN1 8JB

If you've ever stared up into the night skies and tried to identify planets and constellations among the millions of stars, then *Planetarium* from Paradise Computers could well be the program you've been looking for.



Search the starry night skies for heavenly bodies with Paradise Computer's fun little astronomy program, *Planetarium*

Planetarium is a sophisticated program designed specifically for ST users who enjoy looking at heavenly bodies (stars and planets that is, not Beatrice Dalle).

When first loaded it presents you with a nicely presented map of the World. From this screen you must tell the program where you are situated on good old planet Earth by moving an on-screen cursor over your part of the

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D115) Utopia Cartoon Slides
D117) Bunsen Burner
D119) The Link Megademo
D122) Ghost Pool
D124) Scoopex Seven Sins
D126) Disney Slideshow
D128) Sleeping Bag Demo
D130) System 5 Demo
D132) Alpha Flight Megademo 2
D134) Share And Enjoy 46
D136) Thames TV Demo
D138) Vision Megademo
D140) Fast Cars Slideshow
D142) Mobed
D145) Kefrens Wall Demo
D147) Beast 2 Preview
D149) Treacl
D151) Share and Enjoy 47
D153) Simpsons Mini Mega (XXX)
D155) Glass World Animation
D157) Congaman Animation
D160) Anarchy Scratch Pack 39
D162) Bugs Bunny Anim*
D164) Smurf +Cokeman Anims*
D166) Juggette Animation

UTILITIES

P02) A68K Assembler
P04) North C
U001) Jazzbench
U004) Visicalc Spreadsheet
U006) Intro Maker
U008) Sidney And Friends
U011) XLS Disk 1
U013) Clip Art
U015) The Magicians Utilities
U017) Steel Moon Utilities
U019) CADV
U021) Super C Disk
U024) Red Devil Utils 4
U026) Amibase V3.76
U031) Bootbench
U033) C-Light 1+2
U035) System Checker
U037) Tetra Copier
U053) Text Plus Wordprocessor
U056) Wordwright Wordprocessor
U058) Running Man Update
U060) Mag Media Disk Utilities
U062) New Age Utilities
U063) Pendle Europa Utils
U065) Fonts
U067) ICPUG Printer Utilities
U069) XLS Best Of PD 3

GAMES

G004) Breakout Construction Set
G006) Star Trek (2)
G008) Drip *
G010) Quiz Master 2
G012) Popeye
G014) Tennis *
G016) Flaschbier
G018) Treasure Hunt
G020) Wet Beaver Games
G022) Workbench Games And Hacks
G024) PD Games Compilation
G026) Movie Games
G028) Eatmine
G030) Return To Earth
G032) Klondike
G034) Trek Trivia
G036) Pipeline
G019) Battleforce
G021) Arcade Games
G023) Star Trek The Next Gen.
G025) UGA Games
G027) Hack
G029) PDOM Games
G031) BIP
G033) Stoneage
G035) Jeopardy
G041) Frantic Freddy

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SERIOUS

NAG... a talking desk diary/calendar
LEARN & PLAY (2) eductional stuff
GENEALOGY...family tree database
HOME APPLICATIONS (2) various
VIDEO APPLICATIONS...(4) various
ALTERNATE WORKBENCH...various
TV GRAPHICS (2) art utility
MAC CLIP ART... various clip art
MYSTIC HARDWARE electronics
VISICALC...accounts spreadsheet
RIM BASE... a good database
AMIBASE... another good database
BOOT MENU CONSTRUCTION...(2)
JAZZBENCH... a new look workbench
CLERK...small business accounts
RAY TRACER BUILDER...graphic util
COMMUNICATIONS...includes access
RAY TRACE CONSTRUCTION...
NEW CLI COMMANDS...
NORTH C COMPILER...
BLITZ BENCH...new workbench
LABEL DESIGNER...prints labels
BUSINESS & HOME (2) various
EDUCATIONAL (5) college+
ICONOGRAPHY (3) lots of programs
ASTRONOMY (3) lots of programs
PAGESETTER CLIP ART...
CLI TUTOR... (2)
PROGRAMMING (5) basic languages
64 EMULATOR...
BOOTBENCH...new workbench
600 BUSINESS LETTERS...
MESSYSID...read IBM disks
SUPER KILLERS...Latest virus killers
SYSTEM EXERCISER...analyser
TEXT PLUS V3...word processor
BUSINESS CARD DESIGNER
SUPER "C" DIRECTORY TOOLS
WINDOW BENCH (2)
FORMS UNLIMITED (form creator)
OPTICOMM 1... comms programs
QUICK BENCH...fast workbench
IBM EMULATOR...(2) it works
KING JAMES BIBLE complete (3)
THE NEW TESTAMENT complete
D-COPY 1.6...the latest and greatest
ST & MAC EMULATORS...(1)
COMPLETE CLIP ART SET (8)
IMPLODER V4...file cruncher
NO CLICK...stops disk drive clicking
TYPING TUTOR...very handy
ANALYTICACL...3D spreadsheet
QUOTES... a quotation generator
MOD PROCESSOR...sound handling

GAMES

LLAMATRON...arcade
CARD GAMES 2...all new card games
BLOCK IT...arcade puzzle game
TAROT...astrology predictions
SEALANCE...submarine simulator
MERV THE MERCILESS...arcade
AIR WAR...war strategy
BULL RUN...civil war simulator
DOMINOES...the classic game
CASINO GAMES...card games
WORD PUZZLE GAMES
SNAKES & LADDERS...classic game
RETURN TO EARTH...trading game
HYPERBALL...speedball clone
BOING...arcade
AMOS FRUIT MACHINE...latest
SNAKE IN THE GRASS...arcade
LITTER BUSTERS...arcade
MARINERS MATE...seamans puzzle
BLACKJACK TRAINER
SILVER BARS & THE ENEMY...arcade
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VISA

cont. from p18

world. Because of the scale of this map, you're hardly going to be able to pinpoint an exact position, but then the curvature of the planet allows for a few degrees of inaccuracy anyway.

Once you've told it where you are, a single click on the OK gadget is all that is needed to send you into the next part of the program. This section shows you what you should be able to see out of your bedroom window on a cloudless night. Unless you've got a battery-backed clock installed inside your ST, you'll obviously have to tell the program the current date if you want to get an accurate representation of the night sky at the current moment.

Planetarium includes some quite powerful features which include the ability to search for planets and constellations simply by clicking on their names from a pop-up window. One surprising omission is the ability to search for or even identify individual stars. For reasons known only to the author, there's currently no way of identifying anything other than constellations and planets.

Planetarium certainly isn't the most comprehensive astronomy program you're likely to find for the ST, but it's a nicely presented and very easy to use program nonetheless. Hardened astronomer will probably find the program a little limited, but budding Patrick Moores should check it out.

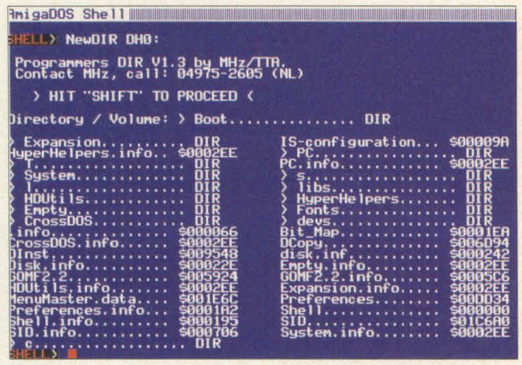
ST 72%

Super C (PD)

Amiga • PDX 260 • Essex Computer Systems Freepost, Basildon, Essex SS16 4BR

With a name like *Super C*, you'd probably assume that this program is a Compiler, but it's not. It's actually a disk jam-packed with useful CLI utilities that can be installed in the 'C' directory of any boot disk.

The author of the disk recommends that you delete the entire contents of the 'C' directory of your Workbench disk and copy these replacement commands across instead. Personally I wouldn't



***NewDIR*, one of the many utilities on *Super C*, is one of many replacements for standard CLI commands. It provides far more information on files and directories than the standard commands**

Escape from the dreaded DOS command line with three magical utilities

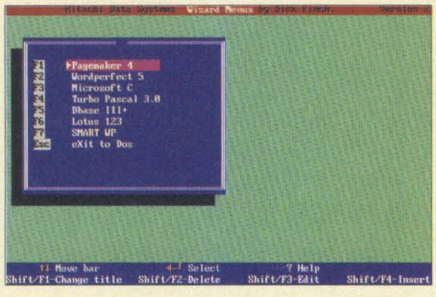
Wizard, PopUp & RWmenu 2.03 (Shareware)

PC • Disk No 9831/YB/ Softcell Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna, Pontyclun,CF7 9PZ
☎ 0443 238630

Delving through my latest bundle of goodies to review, I came across this selection of DOS front end menu control programs. Each one claims to give the user the ability to get away from that dreaded DOS A: prompt.

On the disk are three different menu programs from which to choose from – *RWmenu*, *Wizard* and *PopUp*. They all do essentially the same thing, enabling you to set up your programs so that they can be run simply by selecting the relevant title from a displayed list using either the first letter of the title or a cursor controller bar. Having said that, there are some significant differences.

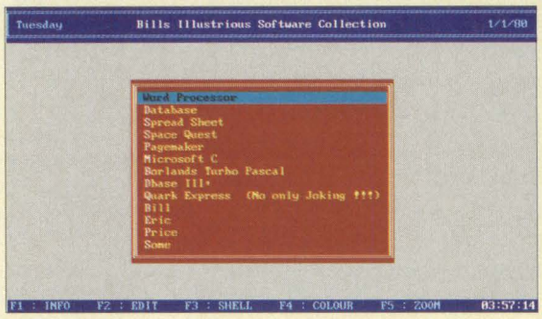
By far the simplest to use is *Wizard*. Its strength lies in the fact that when it is first installed it invokes a procedure which scans all your hard disk drives (or rather C: through to F:) and finds any popular software packages that might be there. It then proceeds to generate the various menu options automatically on the information it has found.



***Wizard*'s simple-to-use front end menu system will make the use of a PC easy, even for the complete beginner**

By invoking a pop-up window, you can change items in the menus, add to them or delete from them. The window enables you to enter the details of the new items such as title, location and any command line options needed. For mouse owners, *Wizard* fully supports the Microsoft mouse and all other compatible rodents.

PopUp is another simple menu program, though it offers a variety of features which make it somewhat more powerful than its cousin *Wizard*. One of these features is the ability to construct multiple level menus, giving you tree structured (hierarchical) access to all of your programs. For example,your first menu might have three options – Games, Office and Programming. On selection of the Games option, the next level of the menu is then loaded which might display *Elite*, *Chess*, etc.



***PopUp* is easy to use and simple to set up. Its ability to build multi-layered menu structures makes it ideal for anyone who has a large number of applications installed on their system**

MAIN MENU
[A] --> Choice 001 goes here
[B] --> Choice 002 goes here
[C] --> Choice 003 goes here
[D] --> Choice 004 goes here
[E] --> Choice 005 goes here
[F] --> Choice 006 goes here
[G] --> Choice 007 goes here
[H] --> Exit to C:\>
Tue Jan 01 00:12:24 1980
Left [Shift]
Page 1 of 3
RWmenu, Vers. 3.22*808* - (C) Copr. 1990 Robert Wilson - All Rights Reserved

***RWmenu* is a powerful front end menu system that boasts its own very powerful batch control language for setting up such wondrous things as automatic start-up of complicated routines and password protection**

Each individual menu can hold 13 options, which you select by either typing in the first letter of its name, or moving a highlighted bar onto the required option. For each of the options you have the facility to add eight lines of DOS commands (a batch file, if you like) which you would normally enter at the DOS prompt. To edit the choices held in *PopUp*'s menus, you'll need a text editor. Various editors are supported including *Edlin*, *Rped*, *Qedit* and *Wordstar* (but not *Wordstar 1512*).

Finally, *PopUp* offers a DOS shell, and the ability to change the screen colours.

Powerful automation

RWmenu is the most complicated program of the three, but it has some interesting features. It works in a similar fashion to the others, enabling you to set up nine pages of menus, each one of which can have nine options. Its front end operates in the same way as *Wizard* and *PopUp*, with the addition of a screen saver which clears the screen automatically after a user-defined time period to save your screen from the dreaded phosphor burn in.

RWmenu's main feature is the batch control language that it uses to give you the ability to do all manner of wondrous things. How does having password protection on your menu options, and automatic start-up of some of your more complicated applications grab you?

One really useful option is the ability to automatically run an option at a set time or date without actually having to be there (useful for sending that important data to America at two in the morning or alternatively a nice feature for running rolling demos).

All in all I found this selection of menus very interesting and many of them are far better than a lot of the professional alternatives that I've had the displeasure to use. I'm sure that just about anyone who owns a hard disk-based PC will find them a real godsend.

PC 82%

recommend such a practice unless you're working on a back-up, but then I'm sure nobody would do such a foolish thing anyway. If you do, you won't actually lose anything because *Super C* contains crunched equivalents of all the 1.3 commands including Dir, Delete, Copy, Info, Rename etc.

What really makes this disk interesting is the range of extra commands that the author has managed to squeeze in. There are commands to:

- display IFF images
- play animations in a variety of different formats
- play digitised sounds and modules from a variety of different *SoundTracker* clones
- check the internals of your machine (type of Agnus chip, video mode etc)
- change the system font
- check for viruses
- speed up the mouse pointer
- switch fast memory on and off
- plus just about anything else you could possibly think of.

CLI disks are a particular favourite of public domain disk compilations and this one is by far the best. While I didn't take the author's advice and install the whole thing on my hard disk, I must admit that I extracted a fair few of the programs for my own use. They now live on my hard disk and will probably stay there for a long time to come.

Whether you own a hard disk or a floppy-based system, this *Super C* compilation disk is an absolute must for all CLI fanatics. It's absolutely bulging with really useful CLI tools. Go on, splash out.

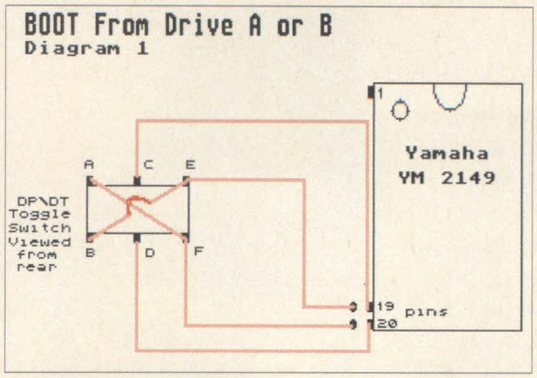
AMIGA **88%**

DIY Projects (PD)

ST • Disk 1737 • South West Software Library, PO Box 562 Wimbourne, Dorset, BH21 2YD

If you can wire a plug without blowing up the toaster and plunging your whole street into darkness then you're perfectly capable of tinkering with your own do-it-yourself hardware projects. This disk from the South West Software Library contains detailed instructions for anyone who fancies their hand at knocking together a few gadgets for their ST.

Included are full instructions plus schematics, enabling anyone who is proficient with a soldering iron to save themselves pounds off the cost of ready made add-ons and cables.



If you've ever fancied yourself as something of a hardware hacker, then South West Software Library's *DIY* disk shows you where to stick you screwdriver and solder those wires

The disk contains no fewer than five DIY hardware projects ranging from a very simple-to-build RS232 datalink cable (for multi-user games and data transfer) to one project that enables you to add a stereo sound facility to your ST.

Other projects include a centronics printer cable (yaawwnn), a boot from drive B modification and finally a four-way joystick adaptor for games that can handle it (US Gold's *Gauntlet*, for example). Some of the projects are a little limp to say the least, but this kind of disk is surely a good idea. PD isn't just about programs and South West Software has proved this with a disk that will hopefully pave the way for many others of this type.

I'd personally like to see someone come up with some more sophisticated projects including such things as a sound sampler (which is easy to build) and an interface which will enable you to connect PC disk drives to the ST. Anyone fancy doing the honours?

DIY Projects disk is an interesting idea. If you fancy yourself as a hardware hacker, then you may well want to check it out. But a word of warning: some of the projects will invalidate your warranty, so be very careful when following any of the instructions supplied.

ST **75%**

cont. on p22

Why squint at your monitor when you can have Panavision computing?

vScreen (PD)

Amiga • Fish Disk 494 • George Thompson Services Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

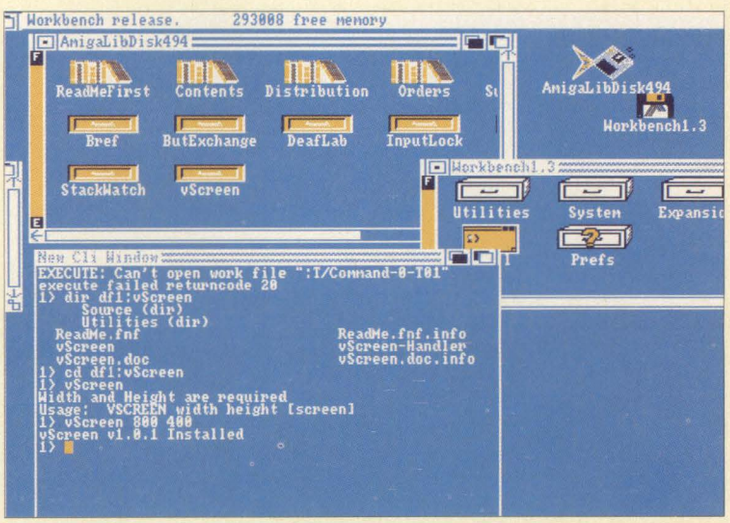
If you've ever drooled over one of those posey big screen monitors so common in the DTP world, then you probably need the love of a good woman. However, if you still hanker after a big screen monitor after a night of unbridled passion then *vScreen* could well be the therapy you need.

Large screen monitors not only increase the size of the on-screen image (making high resolution text almost readable), but in some cases they have been specially developed to increase the resolution of the overall display. For example, the Moniterm monitor for the A3000 increases the resolution of the standard Workbench to 1280x1024.

Unfortunately, they have their drawbacks, price being the main one – expect to pay around £2,000. You also need an enhanced chip set installed to make the thing work. Most of us don't have either the ECS upgrade or even £2,000 to spare, so a program like *vScreen* is a godsend.

What *vScreen* does is to increase the resolution of the standard Workbench screen to a user-specified size to create 'virtual screens'. These virtual screens cannot be displayed in their entirety on a standard monitor (the most you'll get is the standard maximum 640 by 512), but what you can do is easily scroll around your new high resolution screen using the mouse.

So what's the point? I hear you ask. Well, what's nice about *vScreen* is that it enables you to have several full-screen windows open at the same time without cluttering up the Workbench. With *vScreen* installed, you could have programs like *SID* and *Protext* running concurrently in their own section of the Workbench screen and still have space enough to access disk icons and other windows. Scrolling around your virtual screen is handled automatically simply by moving the mouse pointer to one of the screen's four corners.



Screen cluttered up with windows? Then stretch the bounndaries of your monitor with *vScreen*

The program does have its fair share of problems, though. For starters, it doesn't work under Workbench 2.0, so that leaves A3000 and A500 Plus owners out. Next, some programs hate *vScreen*. Even programs that open their own custom screens can have their displays corrupted by the presence of *vScreen* (New Horizon's *QuickWrite*, for example). It's really best to treat it as a novelty rather than a serious programming tool.

AMIGA **65%**

cont. from p21

Emulators (PD)

ST • GD735 • Goodman's PDL
16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650

When is an ST not an ST? When it's doing a pretty poor impression of a BBC Micro or a C64 (inset)

Believe it or not, your ST is capable of some very good impressions. Ok, a convincing John Major or Brian Walden may be a little beyond its capabilities, but I'd like to see Bobby Davro do an impression of a PC (and no, Bobby, please don't take that as a challenge, I don't think the world is ready). We are, of course, talking about impressions of the emulation kind, where your ST is tricked into believing that it is another computer altogether.

Quite a few emulators are already available for the ST commercially, but the PD libraries have little to offer up until now. Just released by Goodman's PDL is a very interesting disk that contains no fewer than four emulators that will enable your machine to run software designed for other computers. These include the Apple II, the fabled BBC Micro and even the Commodore 64. There's also a 6502 emulator, but this is a processor level emulator only, so it's really nothing more than an educational tool.

The most capable of the three 'real' emulators mentioned is the BBC Micro emulator. Unlike a similar device available for the Amiga, this emulator is restricted to BBC BASIC programs only, although all the Beeb's screen modes are supported, including modes 0 and 7 (teletext mode). Most educational software for the Beeb is written in BASIC, so this emulator is ideal for anyone who has upgraded to the ST from a Beeb.

The C64 emulator is bit of a strange beast. The review sample that I was sent seemed rather limited. While the screen certainly resembles a C64, even fairly simple BASIC programs refused to work. Unfortunately no form of documentation is supplied, so I'd strongly recommend that you don't expect too much from this emulator.

Running games is about the only reason I can see that anyone would actually want a C64 emulator and considering that the emulator wouldn't even run my BASIC programs, there seems little chance that it'll run even the simplest of shoot-'em-ups.

The Apple II emulator is a different story altogether. I don't know a lot about this rather aged machine, but what I do know the emulator certainly seems to cover. Most Apple II software was written in BASIC, so you shouldn't have much of a problem getting software to run. But getting anything to work is a rather hit and miss affair.

On the surface, three programs for the price of one certainly seems worth the money, but the quality of the programs that it contains is rather low. Even the BBC emulator is a little limited and as for the C64 emulator, it's not worth the bother of booting.

ST **65%**

Blitz those BASIC bugs to get your programs running

BRef (PD)

Amiga • Fish Disk 494 • George Thompson Services, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

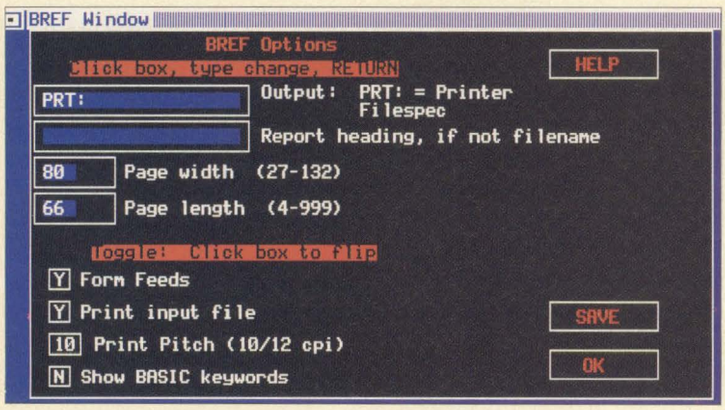
BASIC was originally designed to be a nice friendly language which was easy to code in and easy to debug. But, as any BASIC programmer will tell you, it's all too easy to introduce bugs into your code through simple typing errors. BASIC variables are particularly susceptible to this kind of error – typing 'namesS' instead of 'nameS', for example.

Finding this type of error can be a frustrating task which can take absolutely ages. A better way to hunt down these bugs is to use a cross referencing utility and – surprise, surprise – that's exactly what *BRef* is.

BRef, written specifically for AmigaBASIC and HiSoft BASIC owners, has been available in the PD scene for a few years now, but this latest release is by far the best. For starters, author Dick Taylor has jazzed it up considerably by adding an Intuition user interface to a program which was previously CLI-based only. There are also a number of new features which enhance his program beyond belief.

So what does *BRef* actually do? Well, simply by feeding your source code through *BRef* it will output a listing (with all lines numbered) of your source complete with a table of variables containing details of how many times they were used and where. Simply by checking through this table, you can hunt down all those incorrectly spelt variables and remove them before they can do any harm. Don't worry if you don't own a printer – *BRef* can also output to a disk file, enabling you to analyse its output at your own pace.

Utilities for BASIC programmers are a little thin on the ground, but what is available is of the highest standard. *BRef* is one of those genuinely useful debugging tools that every BASIC programmer should own. Not only will it give you an insight into the workings of your code, but it could well save you many frustrating hours of debugging.



Feed *BRef* some source code and it'll output a listing of your code complete with a cross-referenced table of variables either to the printer, the screen or a disk file

AMIGA **82%**

RunMe (PD)

Amiga • Disk 1186 • AmigaNuts United, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX ☎ 0703 785680

The best utilities are always those that are so brilliantly simple that it makes you wonder why no one ever came up with the idea before. Such is the case with *RunMe*, a brilliantly simple program that should have pride of place on every Amiga hard drive. Based on INOVAtronics' HyperHelpers tool *LaunchPad*, *RunMe* enables you to access programs stored on a hard disk without having to flick through endless directory windows to find its icon.

Simply by telling *RunMe* where the program can be found on your hard disk, it can be run by clicking on the program's name from a list held in the *RunMe* window. All the entries for *RunMe* are held in a separate file that is set up using a conventional text editor. Simply by saving the file out to the S: directory on your hard disk

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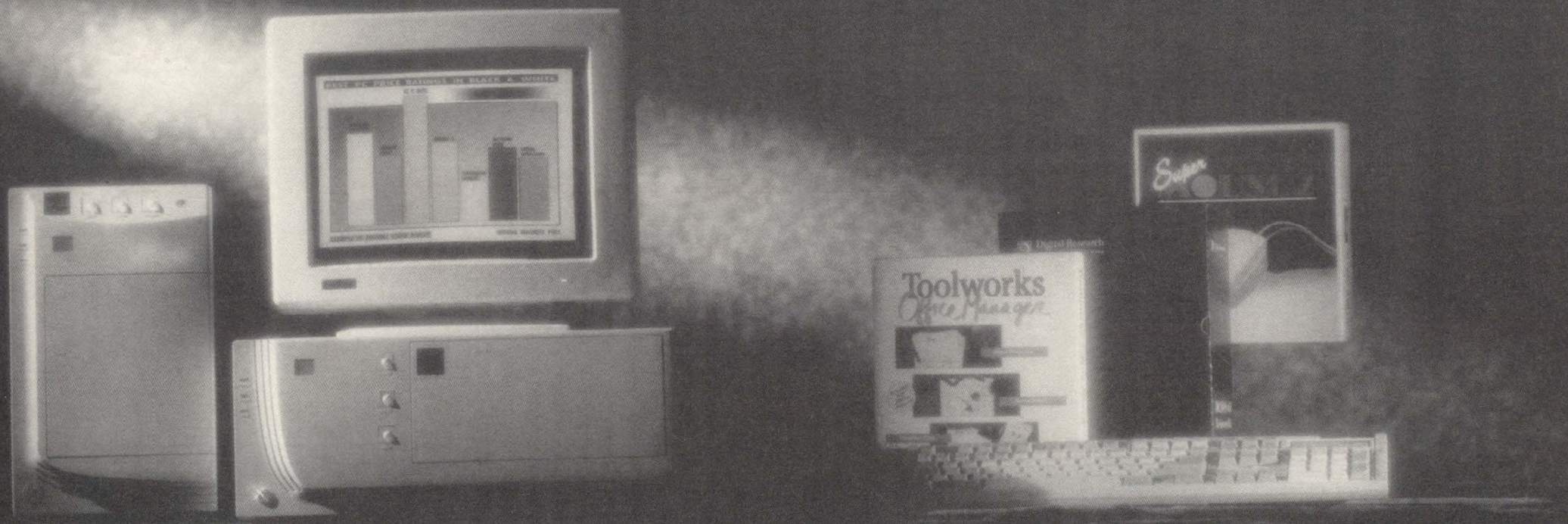

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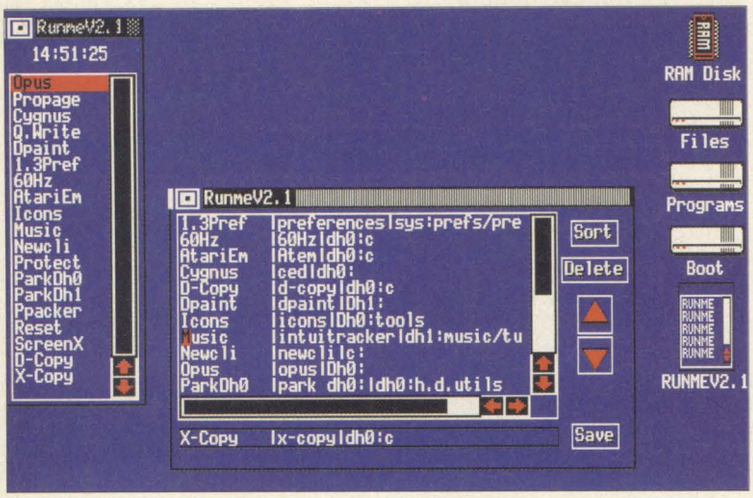


Access any hard disk-based program without ever having to click on a disk icon with *RunMe*

cont. from p22

under the filename RunMe.Config, *RunMe* reads this file into memory and displays all the entries in a scrollable list.

RunMe really isn't that useful to owners of floppy-based Amigas, but it's a real boon to anyone who owns a hard drive. I've had INOVAtronics' version of *RunMe* on my hard disk for over a year now, during which time it has saved me from a lot of mouse button clicking. By installing the program at boot-up, you have instant access to the entire contents of your hard disk without ever having to click on a disk icon.

RunMe isn't quite as well-endowed as its commercial relative, but it's a very powerful program nonetheless. If you own a hard disk, then get this program now.

AMIGA 78%

Gemini (Shareware)

ST • The Ultimate Collection Disk 3
ScotSoft International, 47 Auchingane, The Tryst, Edinburgh, EH10 7HX

No one can doubt that the ST is a pretty capable machine, but Atari certainly cut a few corners when it designed the thing.

Take the machine's (obscenely green) desktop environment, for example. Instead of writing a brand new whizzo GUI (Graphical User Interface) along the lines of the Amiga's Workbench, Atari took the easy route by burning Digital Research's much-loathed GEM into the machine's ROM. OK, it does the job well enough, but the fact remains that GEM no longer cuts it when compared to GUIs on other machines.

Both PD and commercial programmers were quick to jump on the bandwagon with the release of alternative GUIs all promising to bring the ST's desktop environment up to date. One of the best is *Gemini*, a very pretty desktop environment that is not only powerful, but also happens to look rather jolly too (though it's still green, worse luck).

Once installed, *Gemini* performs almost identically to the ST's standard GEM environment, so you'll feel at home almost instantly. But thankfully it looks a darned lot better. Gone are the 'designed-in-a-Blue-Peter competition'

BBS showdown • BBS showdown • BBS showdown • BBS showdown • BBS

Ever thought you'd like to try your hand at running a bulletin board? It may sound like a bit of a tall order, but you may be surprised just how easy it is to set up and run your own BBS. Not only that, but it's also a lot kinder on your phone bill and you always get the last word! You have to supply the modem, but the public domain can supply the software:

Searchlight (Shareware)

PC • TELC-015/TELC-006 • Fantasia Shareware • PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol
☎ (0761) 453716

Searchlight is supplied on a single disk and is easily and automatically installed onto your hard disk using a simple installation routine (Oh what bliss! Why can't more programmers add this simple but indispensable function to their software?)

The program offers all the standard features you would expect to find in a BBS, such as Email (Electronic Mail), a messaging system, bulletin screens and a very efficient Flow control mechanism. Anyway, let's go exploring!

Searchlight's messaging system is a little different from those found on other PD BBS systems as it enables messages to be directed into up to 24 different topic subsections. This enables your users to easily pigeonhole any information that they may require or may wish to donate to the BBS.

For example, if your BBS was running a conference on the best way to kill greenfly on your Azaleas and you also had a discussion running on whether Michael Winner ought ever to be let loose with a film camera again, *Death Wish* fans (all two of them) would be able to get to their required information quickly and easily without having to plough through masses of gardening tips.

Add to this the ability to assign each area a separate manager (who would have basic editorial control) and you've got a very capable and very usable BBS system that people will actually want to use.

Electronic mail (the ability to send messages and letters to specific people hooked into a computer network) is handled in a way that is more common on a Local Area Network (LAN) rather than a BBS. Any mail which is to be sent to a particular person is sent directly to that person's electronic post box, rather than going to a common pool from which it takes ages to find the information you want. This speeds things up considerably, saving your users time and money. You can, of course, still send messages to all users if required.

Message numbering is kept simple on this BBS. It works on the principle that if there are 60 messages on the system, then the last message is number 60. Other BBS systems tend to keep messages with their original numbers attached regardless of how big a gap there is to the next message. Eventually this can lead to unsightly four and five digit message numbers even when only a few messages remain on the system.

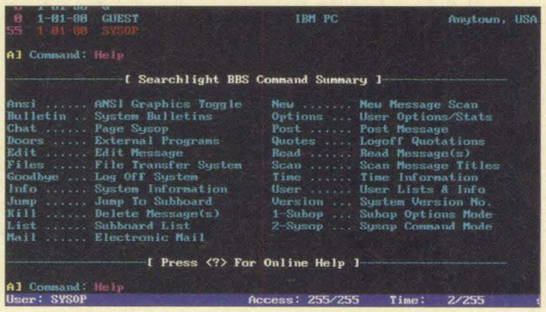
Searchlight also has user-definable bulletins. Unlike other systems where bulletins are defined by the system manager, with *Searchlight* users can also post bulletins. The bulletin function is actually a special message base which offers certain features that make it especially useful for posting announcements and urgent messages.

Searchlight boasts an efficient flow control between the BBS system and the remote terminal. In English, this means that when you pause text, or cancel text being read from the BBS, it happens almost instantly, thus stopping annoying overflow of text.

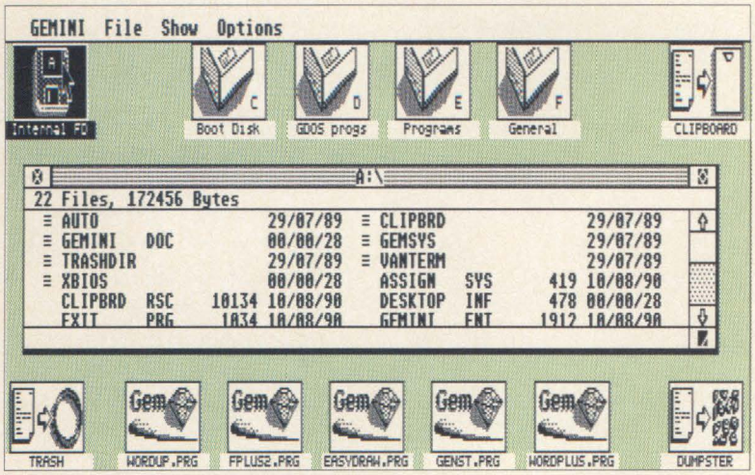
Other features include:

- password protection
- multiple access to 255 levels of information
- a simple user friendly operating environment
- *Wordstar*-compatible full-screen text editor

The *Searchlight* BBS system is an ideal introduction to the world of comms. It offers all the standard features found on larger systems


0 1-01-80 GUEST IBM PC Anytown, USA
55 1-01-80 SYSOP
A] Command: Help
[Searchlight BBS Command Summary]
Ansi ..... ANSI Graphics Toggle
Bulletin .. System Bulletins
Chat ..... Page Sysop
Doors .... External Programs
Edit ..... Edit Message
Files .... File Transfer System
Goodbye ... Log Off System
Info ..... System Information
Jump ..... Jump To Subboard
Kill ..... Delete Message(s)
List ..... Subboard List
Mail ..... Electronic Mail
New ..... New Message Scan
Options ... User Options/Stats
Post ..... Post Message
Quotes .... Logoff Quotations
Read ..... Read Message(s)
Scan ..... Scan Message Titles
Time ..... Time Information
User ..... User Lists & Info
Version ... System Version No.
1-Subop ... Subop Options Mode
2-Sysop ... Sysop Command Mode
[Press <?> For Online Help]
A] Command: Help
User: SYSOP Access: 255/255 Time: 2/255

***Searchlight* is nicely laid out, enabling board users to get what they want with a minimal amount of fuss and bother**



Now doesn't that look a lot nicer than the ST's standard desktop environment. *Gemini*, the logical alterative – it's a pity that it's still green, though...

standard GEM disk and folder icons that we've all come to loathe. In their place are some very pretty disk icons that make the ST a far friendlier machine to use.

One of the most major advantages of *Gemini* is that the icons for applications can be pulled out of their directory windows and placed on to the desktop, something you can't do with GEM but can make you life a whole lot easier. Even when you reboot, these icons remain in place, giving you almost instant access to any program without having to first flick through a disk's directory. This is particularly useful if there are applications that you use regularly.

Another excellent feature of *Gemini* is the addition of a much-needed Command Line Interface (CLI) similar to the ones available as standard on both the PC and the Amiga. Command Line Interfaces may be rather difficult and unfriendly to use, but there's no doubt that they provide the experienced computer user with far more power than a GUI could ever hope to deliver.

Gemini is one of those programs that you just have to buy. The ST's desktop environment is quite usable, but once you've used Gemini you'll never look back. Not only does it make your ST's desktop a lot prettier, but it provides so much more power over the machine.

ST 85%

Power Logo (Freeware)

Amiga • Disk 24 • Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB
☎ 0707 664654

The kiddie programming language Logo has always been looked on as something of an oddity. OK, nobody can doubt its usefulness as a teaching tool for young children, but it's hardly considered to be a serious development tool along the same lines as such well respected languages as C, Assembler and Modula-2.

Gary Teachout is a chap that thinks that Logo should be taken seriously. He has come up with an implementation that takes the good bits from good old Logo and mixes them with the kind of constructs and commands that make a good structured programming language. The result is *Power Logo*, an interpreter that

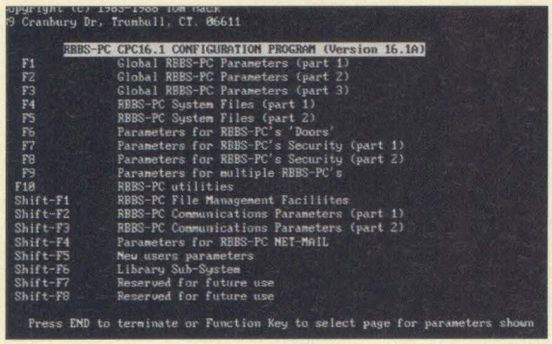
cont. on p26

down • BBS showdown • BBS showdown • BBS showdown • BBS showdown

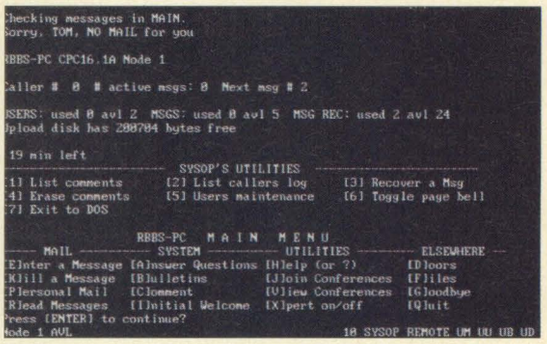
- a unique user interface with a built-in on-line Help facility gives both you and your users full access to the system's documentation
- ANSI graphics support for flexible screen displays
- alphabetically-sorted and date-sorted directories
- XMODEM and YMODEM transfers
- FAST file transfers with advanced buffering techniques

The system also features infinite expandability and the ability to write your own commands (in any language). You also have the ability to give DOS commands from a remote terminal. In all, *Searchlight* is an impressively comprehensive program.

PC 88%


9 Cranbury Dr, Trumbull, CT. 06611
RBBS-PC CPC16.1 CONFIGURATION PROGRAM (Version 16.1A)
F1 Global RBBS-PC Parameters (part 1)
F2 Global RBBS-PC Parameters (part 2)
F3 Global RBBS-PC Parameters (part 3)
F4 RBBS-PC System Files (part 1)
F5 RBBS-PC System Files (part 2)
F6 Parameters for RBBS-PC's 'Doors'
F7 Parameters for RBBS-PC's Security (part 1)
F8 Parameters for RBBS-PC's Security (part 2)
F9 Parameters for multiple RBBS-PC's
F10 RBBS-PC utilities
Shift-F1 RBBS-PC File Management Facilities
Shift-F2 RBBS-PC Communications Parameters (part 1)
Shift-F3 RBBS-PC Communications Parameters (part 2)
Shift-F4 Parameters for RBBS-PC NET-MAIL
Shift-F5 New users parameters
Shift-F6 Library Sub-System
Shift-F7 Reserved for future use
Shift-F8 Reserved for future use
Press END to terminate or Function Key to select page for parameters shown

RBBS offers the sysop a large degree of control over the BBS' operation


Checking messages in MAIN.
Sorry, TOM, NO MAIL for you
RBBS-PC CPC16.1A Node 1
Caller # 0 # active msgs: 0 Next msg # 2
USERS: used 0 avl 2 MSGS: used 0 avl 5 MSG REC: used 2 avl 24
Upload disk has 200704 bytes free
19 min left
SYSOP'S UTILITIES
[1] List comments [2] List callers log [3] Recover a Msg
[4] Erase comments [5] Users maintenance [6] Toggle page bell
[7] Exit to DOS
RBBS-PC MAIN MENU
MAIL SYSTEM UTILITIES ELSEWHERE
[E]nter a Message [A]nswer Questions [H]elp (or ?) [D]oors
[K]ill a Message [B]ulletins [J]oin Conferences [F]iles
[P]ersonal Mail [C]omment [V]iew Conferences [G]oodbye
[R]ead Messages [I]nitial Welcome [X]pert on/off [Q]uit
Press [ENTER] to continue?
Node 1 AVL
18 SYSOP REMOTE UM UU UB UD

Novice users will probably find *RBBS* a little daunting!

RBBS (Shareware)

PC • TELC-015/TELC-006 • Fantasia Shareware • Fantasia Shareware PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol
☎ (0761) 453716

RBBS is a much larger collection of programs, coming in highly compressed format on four disks. The software combines to form a much more powerful BBS but with this power also comes the need to be more aware of the functionality of a BBS system. It has the same basic features as *Searchlight*, namely a bulletin subsystem, a Message subsystem, a file subsystem and a utility subsystem. In addition it has a very thorough security system and it contains extensive safeguards that enhance the security and privacy of information contained on the BBS.

In operation both users and commands have security levels assigned to them, making it hard work indeed for the passing hacker to do naughty things. Further security is provided for messages and file downloads, enabling board users to leave quite personal information on the BBS.

Security violations are logged to the caller's file, and these include any attempt to use functions without sufficient security clearance and any failure to give required passwords. This gives the system operator (or sysop as they like to be known) an idea of who is likely to cause trouble on the system.

The *RBBS* package is very much directed towards the serious enthusiast who already has a good understanding of such systems. As a result, getting the thing up and running isn't really a task for the faint-hearted (the initial system configuration has a daunting number of options which have to be set).

Also included with *RBBS* is a very useful piece of software called *Proanna* which is a statistical analysis program that shows how the system is being used. Among the vast array of statistical information that it provides is a breakdown of what are the most popular items being used, which software is being downloaded the most and even from where most users seem to be calling. This might not sound so amazing, but it's all invaluable information to a sysop.

RBBS is far less user friendly than *Searchlight BBS*. The manual supplied is designed for the experienced user, giving little information on BBS systems in general, and even less of an introduction to the software... um, none in fact.

PC 79%

Verdict

If you're interested in starting up your own BBS but have little experience then I suggest you look at *Searchlight*, as it's a far simpler and much friendlier system to use than *RBBS*. It's not quite as powerful, but most users will probably never find a use for all those extra bits and pieces anyway. However, experienced BBS managers may want to give RBBS a look.

cont. from p25

will happily run standard Logo programs (complete with turtle graphics), but can also be used to produce applications that call upon the Amiga's unique capabilities.

Power Logo is an experimental programming language devised by Gary that is actually based jointly on Lisp (anyone remember that rather ancient language?) and Logo. Versatile and highly interactive, *Power Logo* organises programs as collections of procedures and includes lists as first-class data objects.

From the outset, the goal of *Power Logo* was to develop a language with the power and versatility of Lisp, but with the readability of good old Logo, while providing full access to the Amiga's capabilities. As Gary himself admits, the language is still very much in its experimental stages, but it is complete enough to be usable.

Getting used to it takes some time, but once you've sussed out it's a rather quirky way of working, some quite impressive programs can be produced. Despite this, *Power Logo* still has a very long way to go before it can really be taken seriously. It's servicable enough in its basic form, but more work really needs to be done. Try it for yourself – who knows, you may like it. Besides, we need to encourage Gary to keep working away at *Power Logo* until it really is a first class language.

AMIGA 65%

```
AZ v1.50 - jm forgeas multitasking editor  « Software Winery »
 54/138  33  0x20  I  S  POWER LOGO:Examples/Chaos
   make "r 1
   while [ ( :r 8 ) [
      setrgb :s1 :r ( se 15 + :r :r + :r :r )
      make "r + :r 1 ]
   setrgb :s1 0 [ 0 0 0 ]
   make "r 0
   make "sx 0
   while [ ( :sx 640 ) [
      make "x 0.9
      make "i + 40 / :sx 3
      repeat :i [
         make "x  /    * :r :x     power + :x 1 5
         make "y   -  399  * :x 50
         make "c readpixel :w1 :sx :y
         setpen :w1  if  ( :c 6  [ + 1 :c ]  [ 7 ]
         writepixel :w1 :sx :y ]
      make "sx + :sx 1
      make "r + :r 0.2 ] ]

; ************************************************************
;  bif2          pricesion ( limit )
;     Bifurcation diagram for May's equation.
;  bif2 1
;  ( bif2 10 18 )

make "bif2 [
   procedure [ [ :z ] [ :i ] ] [ :m :mi :r :x :sx :c :y :yy :zz ] ]
   make "s1 ( openscreen 3 3 ( se "\ bif2 :z :i ) )
```

Logo needn't be just a teaching tool as Gary Teachout has proved with the new, improved, whiter than white, why-did-I-ever-bother-with-the-old-one *Power Logo*

Everything you'll ever need to squash those files on to your hard disk

LHA & LHA Utilities 2.12 (PD)

PC • 1933/FK • Software Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna, CF7 9PZ

Getting short of disk space? What you need is an archiving program for your programs, files and data!

What an archiver does is to take any data you supply it with and then compress it beyond recognition. To give an example of how effective archivers can be, I have a *Dbase III* file which is over 2.5Mb in size in *Dbase* format; after running it through an archiving program, I ended up with a file which was just 642K in size.

While most archivers may not give you this kind of compression ratio (database files are renowned for wasting storage space), it gives you an idea of the storage space you can save. Obviously the files cannot be used while they are in archived format, so a de-archiving utility is handy, to say the least.

Many PC PD libraries use archiving utilities to enable them to cram as much software onto their disks, therefore giving you as much software for your money as possible.

One other feature to mention about data in its compressed, archived form is that it is almost impossible to read it or successfully tamper with it, therefore giving you a degree of data protection! Obviously all the determined snoop needs is a de-archiving utility to get at it, but at least you'll keep your secrets away from inexperienced PC users!

```
Mike's Archive Directory v2.0          Copyright (c) 1989 by Mike Sax

Archive: LHA212.EXE
Filename    Length   Ratio   Size now   Method     Date       Time      Made by
--------    ------   -----   --------   ------   --------   --------    -------
!              815     49%        407     ??      7 Oct 91   10:51:06    LHARC
LHA.EXE      33965     71%      24378     ??     21 Mar 91   02:12:00    LHARC
LHA.HLP       6752     36%       2479     ??      4 Apr 91   06:45:34    LHARC
LHA212.DOC   33636     36%      12187     ??      8 Apr 91   09:46:18    LHARC
HISTORY.ENG   7955     35%       2801     ??      8 Apr 91   16:14:54    LHARC
--------    ------   -----   --------   ------   --------   --------    -------
    5 files  83123     50%      42252   LHARC SFX. Requires 92K to extract.

Archive: 2LZH-2.EXE
Filename    Length   Ratio   Size now   Method     Date       Time      Made by
--------    ------   -----   --------   ------   --------   --------    -------
!              824     49%        409     ??      7 Oct 91   12:07:54    LHARC
2LZH.DOC      1739     52%        919     ??      7 May 89   23:01:36    LHARC
2LZH.EXE     13505     62%       8482     ??      8 May 89   11:06:04    LHARC
FLIPPER.EXE  13021     60%       7833     ??      7 May 89   23:03:32    LHARC
--------    ------   -----   --------   ------   --------   --------    -------
    4 files  29089     60%      17643   LHARC SFX. Requires 40K to extract.
^C

C:\LH>
```

***Mike's Archive Directory* is just one of many splendid archiving utilities you'll find on the *LHA & LHA Utilities* disk. It is accompanied by a whole lot of other archiving tools**

If this little look at archiving has whetted your appetite, then I suggest you take a look at a certain disk that contains a whole heap of archiving routines and utilities – *LHA Utilites* from Software Services Shareware. Here's a rundown of what's on offer.

- *LHA 2.12* is the latest edition of *LHarc*, which is the most size-efficient file archiver available at the moment. It's not the fastest, but it is by no means slow. It has all the features of other well known archiving routines, and it also has the ability to make self-extracting archive files. This means that you can store all your data in just one EXE, or COM file, which when run will recreate all the original files. What's more it's PD, so there's no shareware fee to pay.
- *2LZH* is a useful little program that converts archive files from various archiving software into *LHarc* format, telling you at the end how much disk space you saved by archiving.
- *ChkLharc 1.1* searches all the COM and EXE files in a directory and determines whether they are self-extracting *LHarc* files. It also determines whether the file contains the 'AUTOLARC.BAT' file (AUTOLARC.BAT is a file that, if present in a self-extracting LHarc file, will run automatically).
- *FV 1.37* will display the names and attributes of files contained within archive files. It works with a large number of archive formats including ARC, ZIP, PAK, DWC, LZH, ZOO and most self-extracting COM and EXE files created by ARC, ZIP, and LZH.
- *LZComp* contains information, source code and history of the LARC, LZHUF, and LZARI programs.
- *LHdel* is a very useful utility, which automatically cleans up a directory by deleting any files in the current directory that are also in a specified *LHarc* file, including *LHarc* self-extracting files. If you've ever extracted files from an archive file into a crowded subdirectory, whether intentionally or accidentally, you'll know how much trouble it can be to delete these files when you're through looking at them. This utility will clean out files from LHarc files.
- *ZIPdel* does the same for ZIP files.
- *LHdir 1.3* allows you to examine the contents of *LHarc*'s self-extracting files. It will also, if required, convert the file back to a standard non self-extracting archive file.
- *LHRead* is for extracting and viewing the contents of *LZH* files created by *LHarc* without unarchiving them first. Unfortunately, it doesn't work with self-extracting *LHarc* files.
- *Mike's Archive Directory 2.0* (*MAD*) shows you the contents of every popular archive type available, including self-extracting files. New features include the ability to display only specified members of an archive, the name and version of the program that created the archive and the name, version and free space required to extract specified members of an archive.

Also on the disk is the C source code for the compression algorithm that *LHArc* is based on (now you can write your own archiving tools) and also the file layout for a file created by *LHArc*.

Never before have I found such a complete collection of a particular type of utility. It is quite simply one of the most comprehensive collections of PC archiving utilities you're ever likely to encounter. Check it out or regret it for the rest of your life!

PC 95%

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* 5486 **TCB-Accounts Receivable (2)**
* 5499 **TCB-General Ledger (2)**
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* 5525 **TCB-POS Invoicing (2)**
5538 **Time is Money Invoicing**
5551 **Timekeeping Billing**

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15314 **Telemate**
15327 **Telix**

BUSINESS - GENERAL

* 6617 **AppTRAK,** applicant tracker
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7007 **Personnel Supervisor,** database control (1)
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4290 **Freeform**
* 4303 **Information Please**
4316 **MemoMaster**
* 4329 **PC-Data Controller DBMS**
4342 **PRofile Professional DBMS**
4355 **SR-Info**
4368 **Wampum**
* 4381 **PC-File V5.0 (4)**

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1053 **KDCalc Calculator**
1066 **KwikStat**
* 1079 **Morsoft Calculator**
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1131 **Pivot**
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* 8047 **Calendar Keeper,** maker/database
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* 8086 **Collector,** collectibles database
8125 **EZ-Tree,** genealogy/family history
* 8138 **Household Register,** home inventory
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* 8164 **Pop-O-Dex,** dialing phone directory
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8190 **RAD3 Home Library,** database
* 8203 **Resume,** produce your own
8216 **Roots Master,** family tree etc
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* 6071 **MoneyMizer,** Home Accounts (4)
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* 6097 **PC-Budget V2.3,** Home Budget
* 6110 **PMIS-Home DBMS**

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9373 **FileBoss,** directory manager
* 9386 **HDM,** menued security manager
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* 9425 **McFee's VShield**
* 9438 **PKMENU,** shell for PKZip etc
*10023 **PKZip, PKUnzip,** utilities V1.10
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1367 Card Games (Lots Of Em!)
1368 Intro's 62 Hot Stuff
1369 Opti Utils 2 (Buy Buy!!)
1370 Samples Disk
1371 Hardcore Music Disk 3
1372 Virus Killers (Oh! Err!)
1373 Llamatron + Others
1374 Iris Anim (1 Meg)
1375 Crystal Symphonis Music Disk (Very good)
1376 Bronos Music Box 3
1377 Disk 2 of above (FAB)
1378 Tetris 2 (Game)
1379 Fiddle with Fun (Utils)
1380 Move Any Mountain
1381 Music Disk
1382 Wordsworth Demo
1383 Workstation Disk 1
1384 Workstation Disk 2
1385 Quick Bench (Ram Res)
1386 New Viz Slideshow
1387 Alien Breed Slideshow
1388 Messydos, 64 EM, Stem
1389 Disk Label Designer
1390 RSI Demo Maker Font Ed
1391 Bob Editor For Above
1392 Vector Editor For Above
1393 Land Builder (Like Vista)
1394 Protraker V1.2
1395 Pick And Mix
1396 Desk Bench Disk 1

DESIGNER WB PACK

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1462 - Unicopy
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1465B - Slideshow
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AM-FM BY BJORN LYNNE is a brand new disk mag to hit the Amiga scene, for all Amiga musicians young or old this is the one for you, again only available from 17-Bit at the bargain price of £2.50 Serious Amiga and casual Amiga users will love this radical new mag from ex-crusader Bjorn Lynne. I heartily recommend you invest in this one! A donation goes to the authors

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PLEASE NOTE THE NUMBER ON THE JIFFY YOU RECEIVE IS YOUR MEMBER NO, PLEASE QUOTE ON YOUR ORDERS!

Getting connected

With all that talk of baud rates, downloading and protocols modems can seem a bit bewildering to the uninitiated. But ignoring them cuts you off from an essential source of PD software. Neil Jackson plugs a selection of modems into the network and gives the low-down on their performance...

Fed up with waiting around for days for that PD you ordered? Desperate to try out that four-dimensional spreadsheet, that multi-tasking knitting pattern generator or that spigot-measuring routine? What you need is instant access to public domain software and that's exactly what modems can offer you.

A modem enables you to dial up a bulletin board system and download the PD of your choice over the telephone lines. The process is about as simple as typing a letter on a word-processor but there are a few things you need before you get started.

To begin with you need a modem – the 'black box' which connects your computer to the phone lines. The modem (short for modulator-demodulator) is an electronic device which converts binary data from your computer into audible tones that can be carried over the phone line, and vice-versa. This is rather like the system used on old 8-bit computers to save data to cassette tapes, except that the noise is sent to another modem and not a tape.

The modem connects to the normal BT telephone network by cable, usually with a standard BT-

cont. on p30

Getting hooked – what you need before you can make that first phone call

There's nothing worse than buying a modem and finding you still can't use it because you're a lead or a plug missing. These are the vital parts you'll need before you make your first call:

● RS232C MODEM CABLE – A short lead, usually with 25-pin, D-type connectors on each end. Check that their 'gender' is correct – computers usually require a male connector (ie with pins), while modems generally need females (The holes for the pins to go in to). Note that proper modem cables are different to 'null-modem' cables which you use to play multi-player games. Null-modem cables won't work!

● TELEPHONE CABLE – This will usually be much longer than the RS232C lead just in case your phone socket is in a different room to your computer. Make sure that a standard BT-type plug is fitted to one end of the cable. Some modems are supplied with transparent American phone plugs stuck on both ends. One fits your modem, no problem, but the other won't plug into your phone, so watch out.

● POWER SUPPLY – Generally these come supplied with your modem, but check to avoid disappointment. Most modems are not battery-powered and don't get power from your computer. And make sure you get a mains plug with the correct fuse for your power supply, too.

● COMMS SOFTWARE – There's no point in having a modem if you don't have a program to control it. Some modems are supplied with comms software, but it's usually only compatible with PCs. There are oodles of good packages available through PD – and once you've found one, you can usually find more on bulletin boards when you dial out. See our first issue for a comprehensive low-down on the the best that the public domain has to offer.

cont. from p29

Are modems the ultimate expansion devices?

Apart from logging on to bulletin boards to get hold of the latest PD software, there are many other uses for modems:

● MESSAGE AREAS – You can keep in touch with other on-line users through message areas on bulletin baords. Many PD programmers are BBS users so you can leave messages or questions for them about their programs.

● TELECOMMUTING – Instead of travelling to work each day to use your computer you could do everything from home, sending the information down the phoneline. This hasn't taken off as yet, but there is no reason why many people couldn't use their modems for this in years to come.

● ON-LINE SERVICES – There are other on-line services available apart from BBSs. Many have to be paid for, but they have a number of features not found on smaller systems. Some systems send and receive messages on hundreds of topics from people all over the world, have complex on-line games and can let you access large databases of up-to-date information, again on hundreds of topics.

A modem opens up a whole new world of information. Because of these opportunities, modems have been called the ultimate expansion device for computers. After all, can a monitor or printer change your life in such a large way?

approved phone-plug on the end. Nowadays many houses are fitted with plug-in phones and BT sockets, but if yours doesn't have any, you'll need to get BT to install them before you get on-line.

Pop out and plug in

When you want to use your modem, you just pull the telephone cable from the wall socket and plug in the modem – you do the actual dialling from your computer keyboard. Some of the better-quality modems are fitted with an extra socket which enables you to plug your telephone into the modem – a neat feature if you're planning to use your modem a lot and don't fancy the idea of messing around with cables every time you want to use your phone

Modem External Acex DM2400ME

£179 • Personics ☎ 0252 311332

The non-BT-approved DM2400ME is a conventional-looking unit which has a nine-LED display on the front panel. This offers immediate feedback as to the state of the connection. There are light indicators to show the error-correction mode, high transfer speed and auto-answer, plus the more common carrier-detect, off-hook, receive, transmit and ready lights.

At the rear of the casing is the RS232C socket and the power switch. Nearby are the sockets for the supplied power supply and telephone cables. An extra phone socket is provided so that you can still use your normal telephone even when the modem is plugged in.

A power supply is included, but it's built-in to a 2-pin Japanese plug which means you need an adaptor to use it in the UK.

The DM2400ME comes with a detailed 85-page manual, but no reference card for locating commands quickly. The manual does have holes punched in it, though, so that you can stick it in a ring-binder if you want.

A telephone cable is supplied as standard, but the one with our review model had American-style plugs at both ends, rendering it useless with BT sockets. You'd also need to buy an RS232C lead and some comms software in order to get on-line as neither of these are supplied. OK if you don't mind hunting around for all the extras, but hardly ideal for the beginner.

ACEX DM2400ME **60%**

Computer Peripherals Viva V24

£149 • Personics • ☎ 0252 311332

The Viva modem is the oddest-looking modem around. It breaks all traditions because it's designed to be ornamental (and perhaps a little bit trendy) while remaining functional. Basically, it's a tall white box which slides into a 'stylish' black-speckled marble-style stand.

A black screen covers the display. The display itself comprises a lot of cut-out shapes on it which are illuminated from behind when the modem is operating – a rabbit signifies high-speed mode, a computer glows to show you that the terminal is ready, a tape-recorder lights up when you're in auto-answer mode and a few other curious icons also play their part.

The Viva is supplied with the correct type of phone lead but no RS232C cable or BT-approval. It has a power socket though there isn't a power supply in the package.

Designed to be a long-standing feature on your desk, the Viva has an extra phone socket at the rear so you can keep your phone connected.

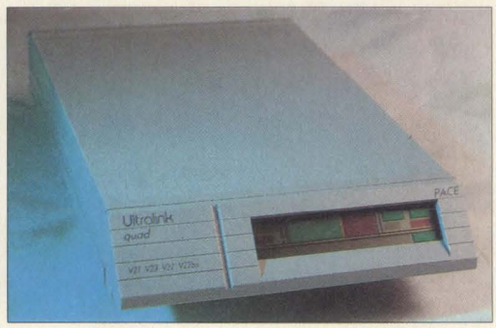
Comms software comes in the form of 3.5-inch and 5.25-inch disks containing *Quicklink 2* for PC-compatibles.

At first the Viva is fun to use because the display panel is so strange. But the novelty wears off quickly, especially as you must be directly in front of it to see clearly which LEDs are lit. But it works well enough to be more than just a coffee table accessory.

VIVA V24 **86%**

Pace Ultralink Quad

£399 • Pace Micro Technology • ☎ 0274 532000



At nearly £400, you'd expect something pretty good and the Ultralink Quad certainly delivers. It's in a class of its own for presentation and its performance is excellent.

The casing is a grey plastic box with a sloping front panel. Instead of LEDs, the Ultralink Quad has a large LCD display which shows all the information you need as text. The CCITT connection standard and MNP level are immediately obvious, as it tells you what they are and doesn't require you to translate a series of flashing lights into English. Even the telephone number you dialled is displayed.

But the Ultralink Quad doesn't just look good; it works well enough to carry all the necessary BT-approval stickers. Even the UK-style 3-pin mains adaptor has BT-approval and the phone cable is built-in with a socket for your phone, so you won't endanger your line-rental contract with BT.

The Ultralink Quad may be more expensive than other non-approved modems but you do get a couple of extras. It can handle all levels of MNP standards as well as the newer (and better) CCITT V42 LAPM system. This can increase the speed of data-transfer by 400 per cent when connected to a LAPM-compatible modem at the other end. This modem doesn't hang around.

If you can afford to go street-legal, this is the modem to have – if you can't, it's still definitely worth saving up for!

PACE ULTRALINK **96%**

normally, to call up your gran on her birthday or whatever (unless she's got a modem of course).

Your modem connects to your computer through the computer's RS232C serial port. This is usually an industry-standard 25-pin socket at the rear of your computer – if yours is different you will probably have to obtain an adaptor cable before proceeding any further. The modem has a similar socket and the two are joined using an RS232 lead, which either comes with the modem when you buy it, or can be bought separately for a few pounds from most computer shops.

Your computer will need to run a telecommunications program (comms or terminal software) to control the modem's internal functions and transfer ASCII codes to and from the modem's memory buffer. The modem handles the conversion of this digital data into analogue signals and transmits and receives them automatically.

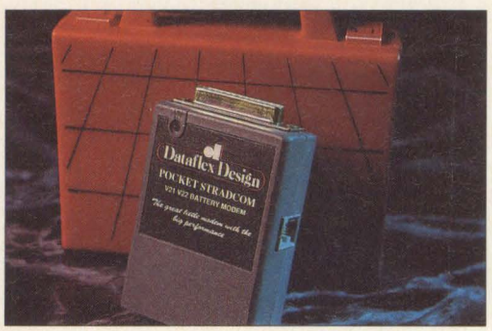
"Often setting up your comms program is the most problematic part of using a modem because bulletin boards use so many different set-ups."

The modem also produces the pulses or tones required for dialling the call to the bulletin board's modem. Most modems can handle both systems but you can find out which one you're using by listening to your telephone's handset the next time you make a call. If it makes rapid clicking noises or has an old-fashioned spinning dial, it's pulse-dialling. If it sounds more like a series of high-pitched whistling bleeps, then it's tone-dialling.

Part of your comms program tells your modem which dialling method to use. Because bulletin boards are set up differently depending on what modem and BBS software they use, your comms program also has to tell your modem the correct transmission speed and data protocol to use – basically these determine how fast and in what 'format' data is sent down the line. Often setting up your comms program is the most problematic part of setting up and using a modem

Dataflex Design Pocket Stradcom

£125 • Dataflex Design ☎ 081-543 6417



The Pocket Stradcom is the smallest modem on review and it could almost fit inside a cigarette packet. In appearance it is a simple grey box and it features just the bare essentials for getting on-line: RS232C connector, phone socket, battery indicator power socket, and importantly, BT-approval.

Power comes from either a single 9v PP3 battery which fits snugly inside the casing, direct from your computer or from a power supply which you can buy separately.

A phone lead is included in the package and it has the correct UK fitting. There's no second phone socket, so you are going to need a T-junction adaptor if you want to keep your phone plugged in while using the modem.

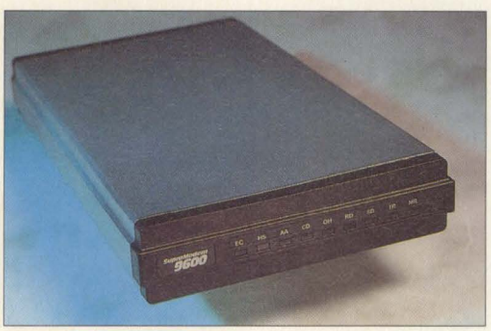
The Pocket Stadcom is not supplied with an RS232C cable, but you might not need one anyway, depending on the location of your computer's RS232C socket. On most machines you can simply plug the Stradcom itself directly into the socket, which is very useful if the back of your computer already looks like Spaghetti Junction.

Comms software is provided for PC-compatibles on a 3.5-inch disk. There's also a small manual and a quick reference list of the Stradcom's Hayes-compatible commands. The whole package fits into a tiny red carry-case (supplied) which makes the Stradcom very handy for portable computer owners who need to access a remote computer from different locations.

POCKET STRADCOM 88%

SupraModem 9600

£499 • Surface Technology ☎ 081-566 6677



This modem is the fastest on review and it can handle connection speeds of up to 9600bps. It's a shame it doesn't carry the BT seal of approval as it's an exceptional package. It performs exceptionally well at all speeds and follows all the normal Hayes-compatible conventions.

It's cased in an aluminium box with a black front-panel housing nine LEDs. These show the state of the usual functions, including error correction mode (MNP5 or LAPM) and the transmission speed (using a multi-coloured LED).

All the connections are tucked away neatly at the rear where you find sockets for a PTSN cable and your phone, an RS232C cable and a power supply. The PTSN cable is supplied with the correct ends and the power supply has a UK-style 3-pin mains adaptor so you can get started right away without having to lay out any more dosh.

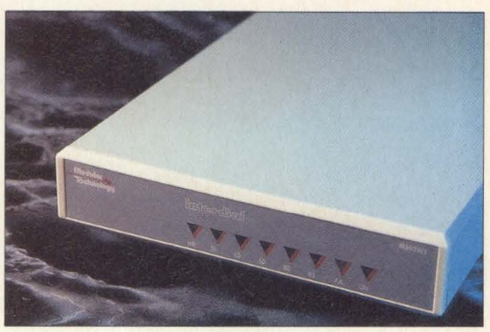
The SupraModem 9600 has the best manual of the devices reviewed. It features clear diagrams and coloured headings on pages as well as precise instructions on how to get the best out of the modem. There's also a quick reference card so that you don't have to flick through pages when you're on-line.

It could be argued that the SupraModem 9600 is as safe as BT-approved modems but because it hasn't been subjected to BT tests it carries a warning sticker. If it was BT-approved this modem would definitely be a top choice.

SUPRAMODEM 9600 83%

Connections Interdial M5024/5

£399 • Modular Technology • ☎ 0869 321323



The Interdial M5024/5 is another British-built modem, like the Pace Ultralink and the Dataflex modems, and it also carries full BT approval.

The unit is housed in a grey metal case with rather cheap-looking plastic panels glued to either end. The back end contains the connectors for RS232C, telephone handset (the PTSN cable is built-in) and power supply (which is included in the form of a UK-style 3-pin integral unit).

There's also a switch for modem's power and a volume control (which requires a small screwdriver) for the internal speaker.

At the front, eight triangular windows are illuminated from behind by LEDs to show the basic line-connection status.

The Interdial M5024/5 has a comprehensive manual that is reasonably easy to get through, but it's not as attractive as some of the others in the review group.

Using the Interdial M5024/5 is trouble-free and there is little setting up to do before you can make your first call. The unit features MNP5 data-compression doesn't quite qualify for the improved CCITT V42bis compression system.

At nearly £350 the Interdial M5024/5 is a little overpriced. It's not particularly well-made (the review machine's end-panels where rather poorly glued on) and it doesn't offer as many options as some of the cheaper modems.

INTERDIAL 76%

cont. on p32

cont. from p31

because of the many variations of bulletin boards set-ups that are used.

Many modems nowadays are 'smart modems', meaning that they have their own internal microprocessor and a large internal list of control instructions. These can alter the way the modem communicates when it makes a connection. Things like data compression and error checking, which speed up and make more reliable the trasfer of data, can be set automatically if the modem detects that the bulletin board can handle it too.

Keeping BT happy

Our survey covers a range of modems at different prices and looks at the level of features and equipment that you can expect with each one. Some modems are more capable than others at the same price and many are not approved by British Telecom. Under your BT contract, you are prohibited from connecting non-approved modems to the network – and you put your BT subscription at risk if you do so.

The reasoning behind this is that if your modem produces tones or noises that BT has not approved it may affect or even damage the telephone exchange. This does not necessarily mean that all non-approved modems *will* produce these tones – it may just be that the companies simply have not submitted their products to be approved. Unfortunately, this argument will not placate BT one jot.

It's worth taking this into consideration before parting with your money. But whatever your choice you'll find a modem opens the way to a wealth of PD software that you don't even need to leave your seat to pick up. Just try not to make BT *too* happy by spending hours on-line and running up one hell of a phone bill. PD

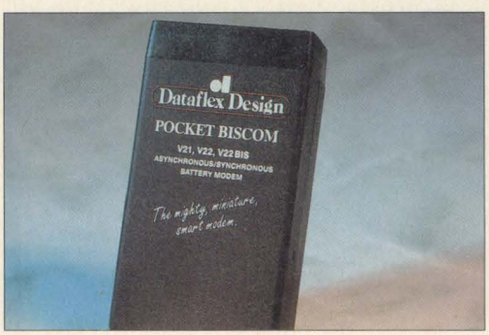
PD comms software

Don't rush out to buy comercial terminal software. The public domain has all you need in the way of comms programs, no matter what your machine, and here are the best:

- **ODYSSEY (PC): Very comprehensive, yet easy-to-use program with a multitude of terminal emulations, a built-in text editor and very fast error correction. Available from Shareware Marketing (0297 24088).**
- **JRCOMM (Amiga): A very impressive-looking package that has the features to back up the gloss. Loads of terminal emulations so that you should be able to link up to most BBSs.**
- **VANTERM (ST): By far the best terminal software for the ST it can be easily upgraded as new transmission standards are introduced. Good macro (keyboard shortcut) utilities and a phone directory make this a must for ST comms users.**

Dataflex Design Pocket Biscom

£174 • Dataflex Design ☎ 081-543 6417



The Pocket Biscom is the larger and more versatile brother to the Pocket Stradcom. Similarly, it can plug directly into the RS232C port on your machine without the need for a connecting cable and it's approved by BT.

The casing is featureless, except for the sockets and a battery warning LED on the underside. This is difficult to see – generally the first sign you get that the battery is a bit clapped out is a display full of garbled characters.

The Biscom comes with a 9v power supply which plugs into a tiny socket. The power unit is a single block incorporating the mains plug. Sadly, it's a 2-pin plug which requires an adaptor (not supplied) to fit into UK mains sockets safely.

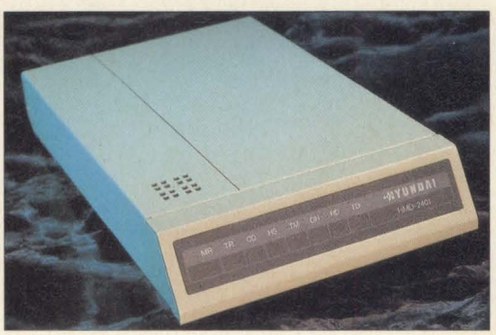
The Biscom is supplied with a lead to connect it to the telephone network, but there is no second socket to enable you to keep your phone connected while you're using the modem.

PC-compatible comms software is provided on 3.5-inch and 5.25-inch disks. A ring-bound manual and a Hayes command reference card is also supplied. The Biscom also comes in a red carrying case which is larger than the Stadcom's but can accommodate the power supply, modem and all the leads and paperwork.

POCKET BISCOM 90%

Hyundai HMD2401

£129 • Personics • ☎ 0252 311332



Attractively priced at under £130, the Hyundai HMD2401 is a capable but average smart-modem. It's housed in a grey-painted metal casing about the size of an external floppy drive and has a sloping front panel that contains eight LEDs that detail what state the modem is in.

At the rear of the unit are the connectors for the RS232C lead, your telephone lead, power supply and the PTSN cable. On top is a small grill for the internal loudspeaker.

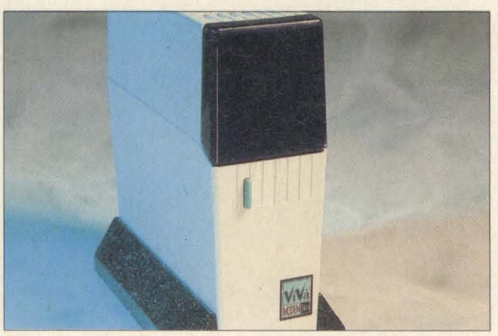
The only extra you need to buy to get the HMD2401 up and running is an RS232C lead. A PTSN cable, PC-compatible comms software and power-supply are all included as standard in the package. The power supply has an integral 2-pin plug but luckily the HMD2401 comes with a standard shaver adaptor so that you can use the modem straight away.

There's nothing exceptional or remarkable about the HMD2401; it can do most of the things other modems can do except for MNP data compression and error checking which means that it can be a bit slow at times. But because the package is so cheap, it represents good value if you're looking for a quick start and you're not bothered about BT approval.

HYUNDAI HMD2401 80%

Computer Peripherals Viva V24m

£169 • Personics • ☎ 0252 311332



This modem is the next step up from the Viva 24. It differs little from the basic model (including its lack of BT-approval), except for its internal capabilities.

The normal Viva can handle most 'smart-modem' commands and protocols including V21, V22 and V22bis. The Viva 24m has additional Miracom Networking Protocol (MNP2-5) compatibility added to improve the reliability of the data transfer.

Most of the remaining commands are the same for both machines, as they are for most modems which use the Hayes-compatible instruction set. These commands are simple four or five character commands which set up the transfer speed, dial-mode, internal speaker and error-checking options. The MNP commands enable the Viva 24m to detect automatically whether the modem it's connected to uses the MNP system too. If the Viva recognises an MNP modem, it informs you of the level of MNP error-checking and compression that's been established.

While the MNP system is generally a good thing, it can make things slower when downloading programs which have already been compressed (like many on bulletin boards).

For £20 more it's worth having MNP 5 on your Viva 24m, but you may need to alter its set-up, as it's configured to wait for MNP connection by default.

VIVA V24M 88%

From the makers of Pub
Your guide to a new PC

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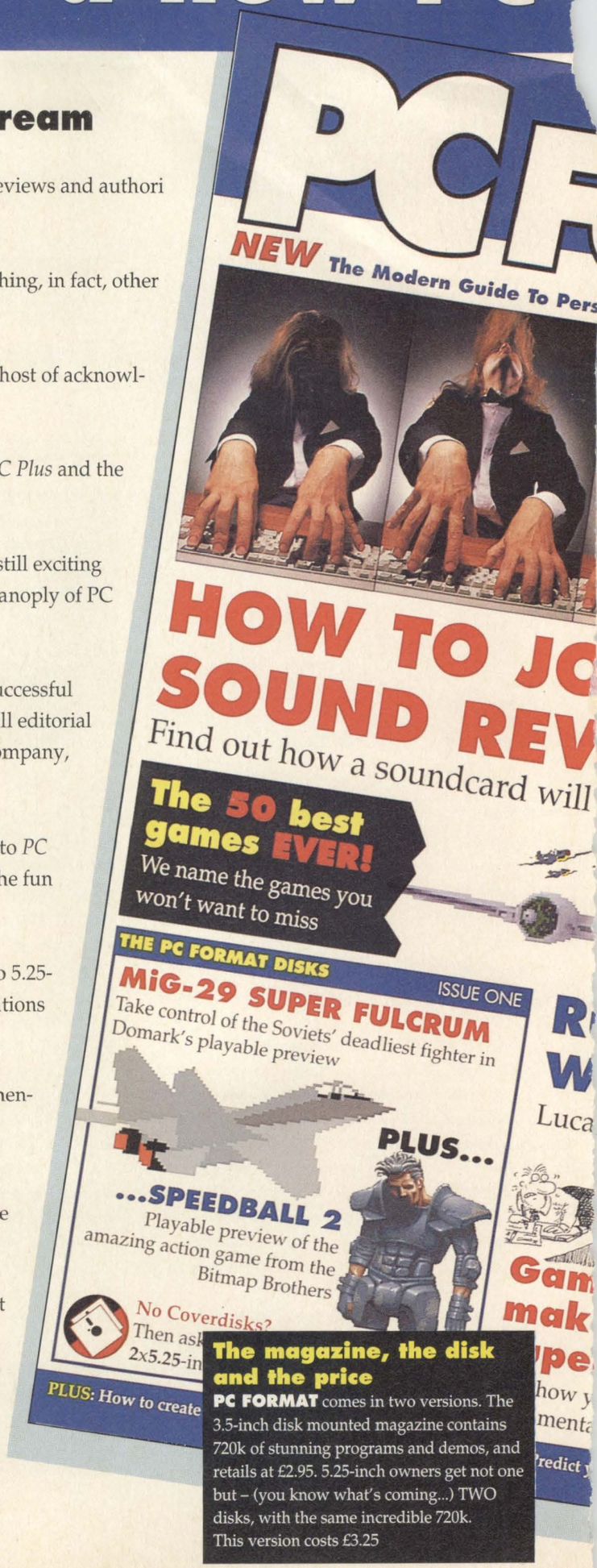
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Playable preview of the amazing action game from the Bitmap Brothers
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The magazine, the disk and the price

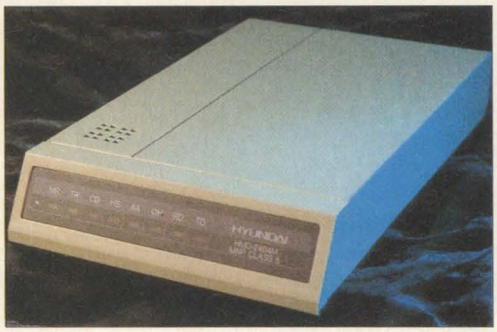
PC FORMAT comes in two versions. The 3.5-inch disk mounted magazine contains 720k of stunning programs and demos, and retails at £2.95. 5.25-inch owners get not one but – (you know what's coming...) TWO disks, with the same incredible 720k. This version costs £3.25

Price, protocols, performance – at a glance

Modem	Price	Protocols	Error handling	Connection Speeds x100bps	BT Approved
Stradcom	£125	V21 V22	none	3/12	Y
Biscom	£174	V21 V22 V22bis V23	none	3/12/24	Y
DM2400ME	£179	V21 V22 V22bis V23	MNP2-5	3/12/24	N
Viva V24	£149	V21 V22 V22bis	none	3/12/24/96	N
Viva V24m	£169	V21 V22 V22bis	MNP2-5	3/12/24/96	N
HMD2401	£129	V21 V22 V2bis	none	3/6/12/24	N
HMD2404M	£149	V21 V22 V22bis	MNP1-5	3/6/12/24/48/96	N
Ultralink	£329	V21 V22 V22bis V23 V32	MNP1-5 V42	12/24/48/96	Y
Supra9600	£499	V21 V22 V22bis V32	MNP1-5 V42 V42bis	3/12/24/48/96	N
2400Plus	£220	V21 V22 V22bis	MNP2-5	3/12/24	N
M5024/5	£399	V21 V22 V22bis V23	MNP2-5	3/12/24	Y

Hyundai HD2404M

£149 • Personics ☎ 0252 311332



The Hyundai HD2404M unit is an improved version of the Hyundai HMD 2401 model with MNP standards up to level 5. It uses the same casing and comes supplied with the same leads and power supply (and adaptor) as its stablemate.

The HMD2401's test mode LED is replaced by a similar indicator to show auto-answer mode. This is a new feature on the HMD2404M and is only likely to be of use if you're thinking of getting other modem owners to call you.

The HMD2404M has a reasonable manual which manages to describe what you need to do to get up and running despite a few Japanese translation problems. There's a quick reference card included to help you locate all the modem commands in a hurry. PC-compatible software is also included on both types of PC disk.

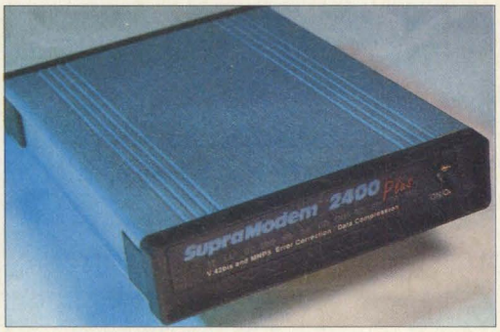
Like many Japanese and American modems the HMD2404M is not BT-approved and although it seems to operate perfectly well it is not strictly legal to use it on BT's telephone network.

However, in terms of operation the HMD2404 conforms to most of BT's rules governing bell-ringing circuitry and data transmission speeds, so you will be unlucky to encounter any problems due to the lack of approval.

HYUNDAI HD2404M 84%

SupraModem 2400 Plus

£220 • Surface Technology ☎ 081-566 6677



The forerunner to the SupraModem 9600, the 2400 Plus version is smaller and cheaper. It still offers a great deal of flexibility although it doesn't carry BT-approval.

For a small unit (4 inch x 6 inches x 1 inch), the 2400 Plus has big-modem power and versatility. It can handle MNP levels 2 to 5, V42bis (LAPM) error correction and BLTZ compression with very little setting up.

It has individual LEDs on its front-panel which show the current state of all these systems, plus the usual connection state. There's even an error-detection LED which tells you whether error-correction is occurring so you can redial and hope for a better line if the data-transfer is bad.

PTSN cable and power supply are included and both can be connected without modification. There's a second phone socket too and a large on/off button on the front. A detailed and easy-to-read manual is included (and this can make a heck of difference when you're having problems) and there's a quick reference card.

When you consider that the 2400 Plus can be configured to transfer data at around 9600bps (in LAPM mode) it seems an ideal choice. Sadly this is marred by the BT warning sticker which makes it risky.

SUPRAMODEM 2400PLUS 86%

Jargon Busting

● **AUTO-ANSWER** – A modem which can answer an incoming call by detecting the ring pulses. This is followed by an attempt to link with the calling modem – and either a successful connection or a hang-up.

● **AUTO-DIALLING** – A modem that can dial by itself – it doesn't need to be connected to a phone. Your comms software sends it the number and you sit back and wait for the connection.

● **BAUD RATE** – A measurement of the speed at which data is transferred. So, for example, a madem with a baud rate of 9600 is faster than one with baud rate of 2400. You have to make sure that your modem is set to receive at the same baud rate as the modem to which you are connected is transmitting.

● **CCITT** – The international governing body for telecommunications. It's French for International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee. They grade and standardise all the various modem-to-modem protocols.

● **DOWNLOADING** – The process of transferring an individual datafile or program from a host computer into your own. The process generally takes care of itself once initiated. The two computers pass the data as continuous blocks, constantly checking for errors until the transfer is complete. There are several different downloading protocols, including XMODEM (the slowest), YMODEM, ZMODEM (the fastest).

● **DUPLEX** – the capability to both send and receive data simultaneously.

● **PROTOCOL** – the set of rules which govern the way two computers communicate and check each other for errors. Most comms protocols have a CCITT 'V' grade (V21, V22, V22bis, etc). Some modems also support American BELL standards but these are not used in the UK. Downloading protocols are different; they govern the way individual files (rather than modems) are handled once the modems are communicating. Here's what those different V numbers mean:

V21 – 300bps (bits per second) and full duplex mode. An elderly system, but still widely used.

V22 – 1200bps and full duplex mode. Heavily favoured by bulletin boards.

V23 – 1200bps to receive and 75bps to transmit. Gradually fading out, but still used on Prestel.

V22bis – 2400bps and full duplex. Growing in popularity owing to its improvement over V22.

V32 – 9600bps and full duplex.

V32bis – 14400bps and full duplex.

V42 – CCITT standard for error correction. It's the same as the Miracom Networking Protocol (MNP) level 4 system which some American modems offer.

V42bis – CCITT standard for data compression, including the MNP 5 compression system and MNP 4 correction.

V24 – CCITT standard for computer-to-modem connections. The same as the US-designed RS232C standard which covers normal modem cables and connectors.

● **PSTN** – The Public Switched Telephone Network. BT's normal, everyday telephone network which was originally designed to handle just voice-calls.

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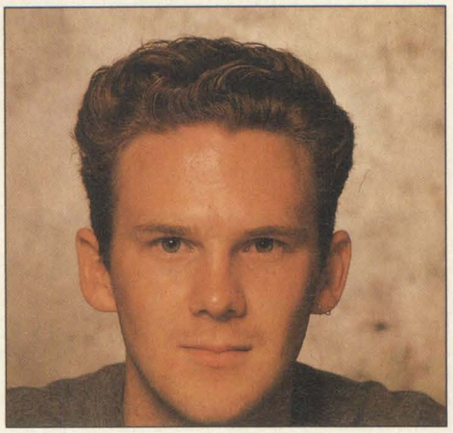
Games



Christmas is a time for festive fun. And what could be jollier than a good game or three? Whether it's showing some Xmas 'spirit' to invading aliens, or a more sedate brain game against your plastic pal, there's plenty of PD and shareware to keep you occupied on the big day. Adam Waring brings you a lovingly gift-wrapped selection...

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Mission X (PD)

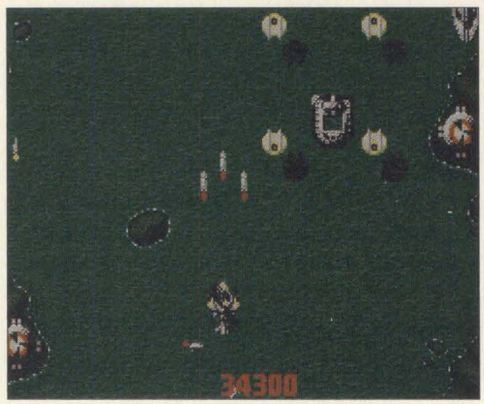
Amiga • G208 • NBS, 132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle Of Wight, PO30 5LH.
☎ 0983 529594

Weirdos from outer space are at it again. Populating unoccupied planets, where no one lives. Spreading their menace across the galaxy by cultivating civilisations and doing no harm to anybody. Is there no end to the evil twisted space fiends' plans?

Well, it's got to stop. I didn't fight two galactic wars for them to come swarming in, taking our jobs, copping off with our babes, talking to our washing machines... (Actually, I didn't fight any galactic wars, but that's beside the point.)

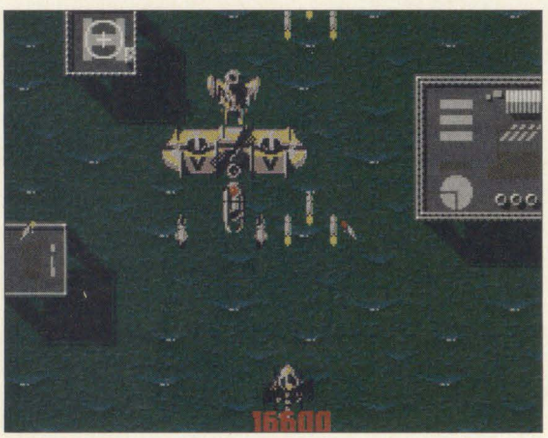
There's a principle to be upheld here, and what better way to uphold it than by getting in the cockpit of your plutonium-powered death machine and blasting the living daylights out of the green menace.

For 'plutonium-powered death machine' read 'clapped out old helicopter that would have trouble winning a race against a three-legged geriatric tortoise'. Still, things aren't that bad. You're armed with tri-directional laser blasters. And the aliens, though having far greater strength of numbers, are as thick as great big steaming piles of the stuff.



It's worse than 'Nam, this. Cheltenham at rush hour can be a pretty hair-raising experience

The game starts with you flying your chopper over a water-filled landscape. The aliens have built many heavily defended structures, which will shoot at you with hardly any provocation other than a heavily armed military helicopter flying over their land with all guns blazing.



Lordy lawks! It's end-of-level-guardian time. He has a lot of bombs with your name on them. Best to give him a taste of his own medicine

The opposition is split into two main types; ground-based installations that shoot at you and flying machines which, erm, also shoot at you. And if you're not careful, you're going to get hit. Best thing for it is to blast 'em out of the skies before they get the chance.

It's pretty standard shoot-'em-up fare. The basic gameplay consists of avoiding enemy fire and spaceships while trying to pop 'em. Almost everything has to be hit more than once before it will give up the ghost, and the enemy fire is relentless, if rather predictable.

It's quite a slog to get through. Your helicopter responds sluggishly to the controls; often it's a case of seeing the incoming missile, but being unable to do anything about it. The collision detection's none too generous either. Most of the time you feel cheated of your life through these flaws, rather than your own lack of skill.

The graphics are pretty good, though; the seascape background is impressive and the sprites are well drawn. Sound is limited, consisting of bangs and explosions, with the occasional warble when you pick up bonus points.

It's not a bad effort with smooth scrolling, pretty graphics, and fair gameplay. But there are a few black marks. There isn't all that much variety and pick-'em-ups consist solely of extra points, rather than flamethrowers and atomic bombs.

AMIGA **77%**

Exodus (Licenceware)

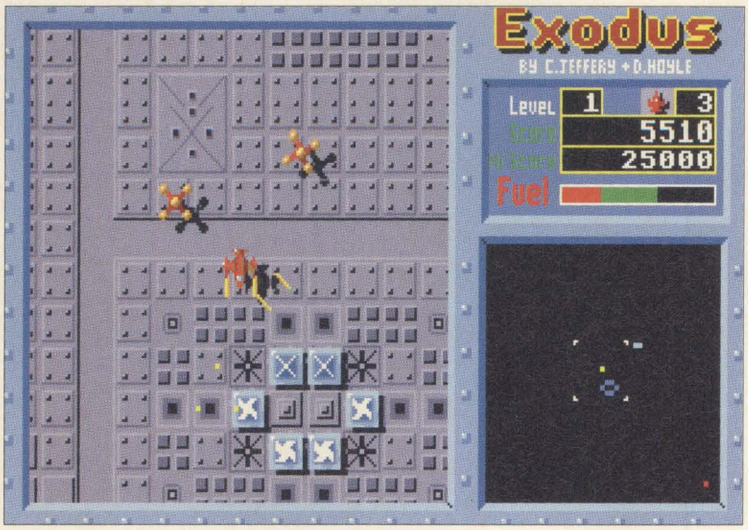
ST • Bu-41 • Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness, IV2 4PT.
☎ 0463 225736

If you thought the Death Star was bad, then you haven't been to Exodus. A heavily defended man-made satellite that is really asking for a lone space fighter to go in and blast it to smithereens. Over to you, trooper.

Exodus is a multi-directional scrolling shoot-'em-up, which makes it slightly different from many run-of-the-mill vertical-scrollers. The scrolling is continuous, but it is quite slow. This fighter wasn't built for speed.

There are plenty of things to destroy on the artificial moon's surface. Then again, these things are trying to destroy you at the same time. Fair's fair.

To progress to the next level (an even meaner satellite) all ground targets need to be obliterated. A radar



Eight-way scrolling, pretty graphics and lots to shoot makes are the ingredients for the cake they're calling *Exodus*. It's a bit on the slow side for a shoot-'em-up, though

scanner tells you where everything is. Being spherical in shape, the surface wraps round so you can go on for ever, circling the planet, if you're really bored.

The graphics are small, metallic-looking and explode nicely. Sound isn't up to much, crude explosions and a digitised, 'Yahoo!' between levels.

Exodus is a well put together game. It may not be fast enough for some shoot-'em-up fans, but there is plenty of danger in the forms of baddies and bullets to avoid. It should keep those with an itchy trigger finger occupied.

ST 77%

Blast (Shareware)

Amiga • George Thompson Services Ltd, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

In space no-one can hear you scream. Which is probably a good thing, really, considering what you're likely to be screaming while playing *Blast* (Eat **** and die, alien scum! Chew on this, vile green mother-******! Take that you bounder! That sort of thing).

Blast has the usual scenario. Hordes of mutated alien space-fiends are taking over the Universe/Galaxy/Solar System/planet/Milton Keynes. And who should stand in their way? A battalion of heavily-armed death cruisers with plutonium-spitting mega-cannons? No, not quite. A squadron of lightning-fast quasi-fighters with ultra-sonic extermination rays? Closer, but you're still not quite there. You? Yep, that's right! Just you in a rusty old bucket of a spaceship against the maraudering hordes of hell's ninth plane.

Still, you're dead 'ard and you're gonna show these filthy green alien scum a thing or two. You pilot an

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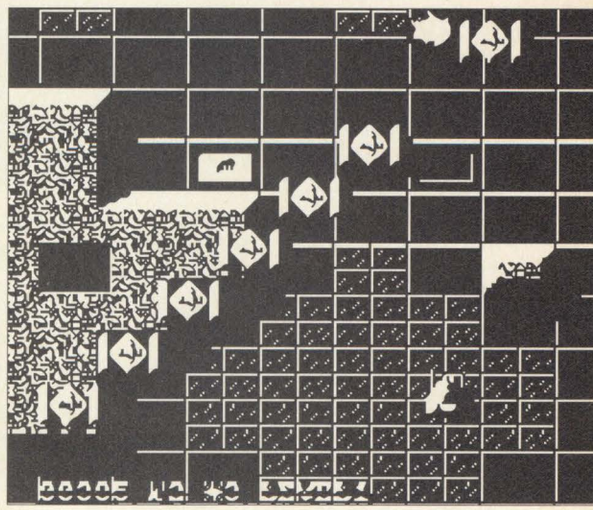


What do you get when you cross maraudering alien hordes with a plutonium mega-cannon? Death and destruction, that's what!

Hundreds of Martians to kill and no cold virus to help you out...

Monuments of Mars (Shareware)

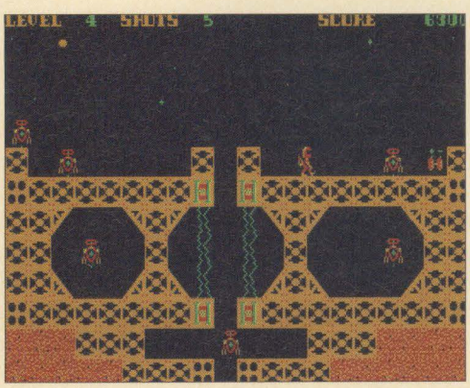
PC • GA139 • PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

The chances of anything coming from Mars were a million to one, they said. Just shows what *they* know! The red planet is in fact teeming with space creatures of an alien intelligence! Quite simply, they have to die.

So, it's on with the Bacofoil and out with the blaster. Our hero (that means *you*) has landed on the surface of our nearest neighbour. From then it's a case of exploring the mysterious caverns of Mars, zapping any little green men who happen to get in the way.

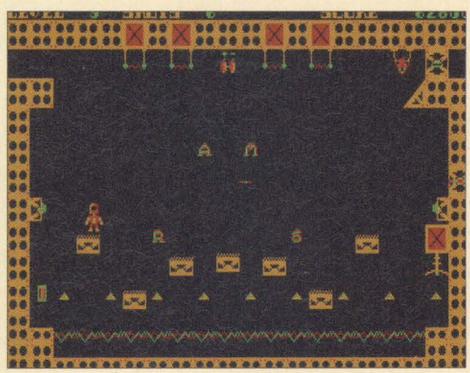
The antenna-heads have laid a series of devious traps, though, to make your life difficult. It's for the best, though, because otherwise you'd have a really boring game with nothing to do.

Every screen is a puzzle. You need to work out the sequence of movements necessary to complete it. The exit from every screen is locked by a gate, and pass cards need to be collected before you can make good your escape. A multitude of laser beams and traps need to be dealt with, often with sets of levers and buttons. But there's plenty of surprises in store. For instance, there are a number of hidden platforms that only appear after you've performed certain actions.



Enter the bowels of the planet through this long drop. Luckily it does you no harm. Must be less gravity, or something

The aliens are more of an inconvenience than a threat and can be easily dispersed with a blast from your laser cannon. It has a limited charge, though, so it's wise to jump over the monsters wherever possible and save your shots for the more dangerous ones. Switches can also be shot if you can't be bothered to walk up to them to switch them on. You can recharge your blaster by collecting pick-'em-ups that lay around the caves.



Those nasty-looking lasers at the bottom need to be turned off. Shoot the button on the left to do this

The graphics are drawn in the four-colour CGA mode regardless of the specifications of the machine it's running on. Atmospheric hues have been chosen, however, and the screen is composed of reds and oranges that make for quite a convincing Marscape. Some of the aliens are quite pretty, but this is no time for sentiment. Rip 'em in two with your laser blaster anyway.

The sound is good mainly because there's not too much of it! No attempts at appalling tunes, or over-the-top sound, just simple fx at appropriate points.

The gameplay is flawed; some would say severely. You have unlimited lives for a start, and theoretically could play the game forever until you complete it. Every time you die, you restart with the same amount of bullets. Should you be wasteful it's often a good option to simply top yourself and play the screen again.

But it's brilliant fun all the same! The puzzles are all cunningly laid out, and will have you glued to the screen, determined to solve each one. And should you get through the lot? Well, that's exactly what the programmers, Apogee, would like you to do, so that you send them the shareware fee that entitles you to the next two games in the series...

PC 88%

cont. from p37

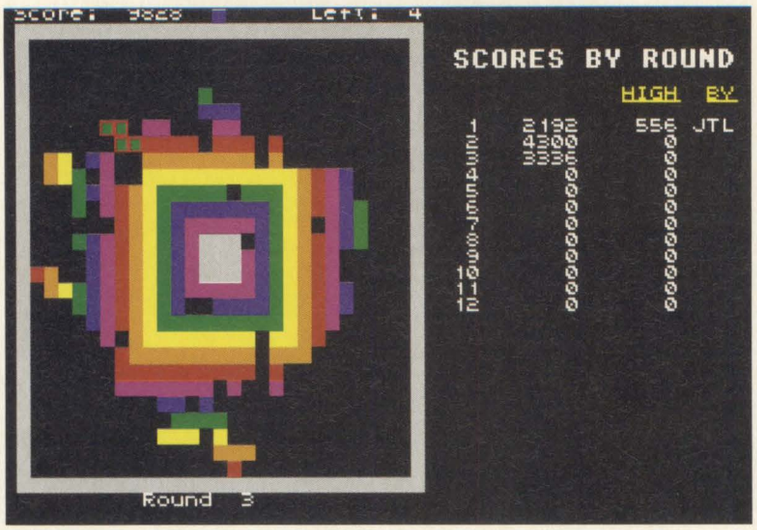
antiquated old space ship. Battle is done against a metallic bas-relief background. Tall towers stand up from the ground and have to be avoided.

The aliens attack in waves. Different aliens have different attack strategies and though none of them would make it into MENSA, or indeed pass their 11 Plus, sheer weight of numbers ensures that they stand a very good chance of making you very dead indeed.

In this game points mean prizes. You can spend your score at the end of each round on extra firepower, more lives and so on. But to get there you'll have to face a particularly tough mothership and live to tell the tale.

The graphics are OK, but they do look a bit dated. I mean, come on, the bas-relief look is *so* 80s, don't you think? But there's copious quantities of fun to be had despite a few missing elements – there are no pick-'em-ups for a start. Aside from that, *Blast's* entertainment and playability factor is still very high.

AMIGA **84%**



Uh oh, the end is near, I fear. *Valgus²* is based on *Tetris*, but complete rings need to be formed, rather than lines. The blocks fall in all four directions and it's trickier than a very tricky thing

Valgus² (PD)

ST • GM0048 • Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness, IV2 4PT
☎ 0463 225736

Good games don't die. They just get rewritten countless times with numerous variations. *Valgus²* is yet another copy of *Tetris*, but has a novel twist that breathes new life into the beast.

It's a sort of four-way version. The blocks fall from all four sides of the screen. The idea is to completely surround a central block. Do this and the bricks disappear and everything else gravitates inwards. The blocks gravitate steadily towards the opposite edge of the screen, stopping when they hit a block and can move no further. You have to try to guide them to the central block. Should you miss they wind up blocking the opposite edge of the screen. The game is over when all four sides of the screen are completely blocked up.

Complete a predetermined number of rings and you're through to the next level. Thankfully you start afresh with the screen completely cleared of debris. With each new level, the pace hots up a little. On the later levels you barely have the thinking time necessary to put the tiles in the right place. Panic mode sets in and once you've made a couple of mistakes it's difficult to recover from them, more difficult than in *Tetris*.

Like all sequels, it's not as good as the game on which it's based; *Tetris'* originality was a large contributory factor to the game's huge playability. *Valgus²* is a great little game, though, and you'll keep going back to it.

ST **84%**

Get hypnotised by by a game that's more than a load of old balls

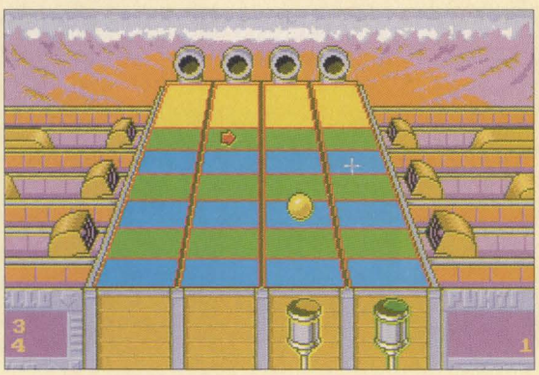
Hypnotic Land (Licenceware)

Amiga • Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA
☎ 0942 495261

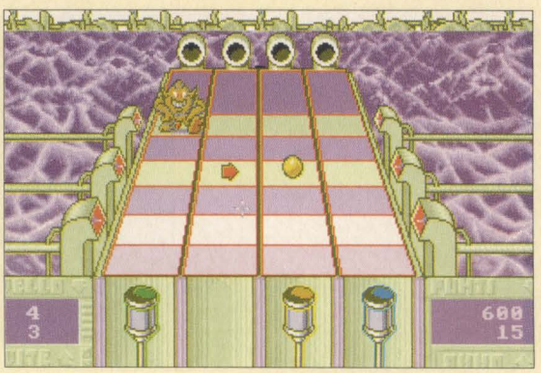
What a load of old balls! And it's your job to sort them into the correct order as they cascade towards you down the screen. A number of receptacles appear at the end of a conveyer belt. The belt is four lanes wide. Balls appear from chutes at the top of the screen and roll downwards. You can influence their path by placing arrows on the belt forcing them to change lanes.

The idea is to manipulate them in such a way that they roll into the buckets of the same colour. Simple, eh?

Well actually, no. Bloody complicated is more how I'd describe it. It's all right when there's just one bucket and one ball on screen at the same time (to tell the truth, it's a bit dull as it's too easy when that's all there is). But when you have three different coloured buckets which keep swapping places, tons of balls and the octopuses all on-screen, then it's a different matter entirely.



Manoeuvre the balls into the correctly-coloured buckets at the end. Arrows on the track shift the lane it rolls along



Things get even harder in later levels. There are more pots, and horrid monsters that gobble your balls

The octopuses? Let me tell you about the bleedin' octopuses. Just when you've got everything worked out, all the arrows in the right place, the balls nicely lined up to drop in the right bins, these little blighters come along, taking your arrows away and causing havoc. And if they weren't bad enough there are the monsters who come on-screen and 'eat' your balls. Painful.

Each screen is completed when a certain amount of points have been scored. You amass points by collecting the right balls in the right containers. Should a ball fall into a bucket of the wrong colour then you lose points. Multi-coloured balls can go in any container and score double points too (so we like 'em). Miss the balls you need and you lose one of your limited number of lives.

Although the game starts off easily enough (just one ball and one bucket) matters are soon complicated. Every level offers a new twist, with monsters, octopuses and pipes that swap places being added. It gets quite manic and is comparable to such classics as *Klax*.

The graphics are good – though they don't really have to be for this sort of game. The backdrops are colourful and the screens change after every couple of levels. A groovy tune plays throughout, though there's no sound fx that react to any of your actions on-screen, which is a bit of a shame.

Hypnotic Land is an excellent puzzler. It has all those qualities that make classics classics: a simple idea, easy controls and an ever-increasing difficulty factor that keeps you coming back for more. It's addictive. It's fun. And it really should be in your collection!

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cont. from p38

Exterminate (Licenceware)

ST • BU44 • LAPD
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Thar's aliens in them thar planets. So it's down to the surface for a quick spot of extermination. After all, if they didn't want to be shot to bits, they shouldn't get in the way of your bullets, should they?

You arrive on the planet's surface in what looks like the Apollo landing module. This takes ages and no amount of fire-button punching will speed up the process. A hatch opens up and what should emerge? You'd reasonably expect it to be an advanced, fission-powered quasi-fighter with laser-guided proton bombs. It's a bit of a disappointment, then, when all you're actually given to launch an attack on the mutated alien hordes is a toboggan armed with a pea shooter.

Oh well, that's life. The sled moves agonisingly slowly across the planet's surface. The aliens are chicken and refuse to come out to play, so if you want a bit of sport you have to enter the cavern that serves as their lair to sort 'em out.

The aliens make suicidal attacks on your sleigh. You have to shoot them as they come towards you. The problem is that your gun only shoots from the middle of your sprite which means that the aliens can crash into the top and bottom of your sledge.

Once you find the aliens there's no need to advance any further because they will come to you. All you need to do is keep fire pressed and attempt to weave through their attacks. Yawn.

Exterminate is awful. It's slow, boring and has the addictive qualities of a wet haddock. Budgie games are supposed to be higher quality software, supposedly justifying the licenceware tag. Sorry, but this is crap.

ST 22%

Exciting, fast, playable, addictive. Unfortunately, these are not adjectives that you'd use to describe *Exodus*, a rather sad example of the shoot-'em-up genre

Pack your backpack, light your lamp, we're going on an adventure...

The Mystic Well (Shareware)

ST • Riverdene
30a School Road, Tilehurst,
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You have to be very brave to march into a dungeon full of monsters that have every intention of killing you. You have to be incredibly stupid to do it without any trousers on. That's what lies ahead, though, should you decide to load up *The Mystic Well* in which case you don't really have an awful lot of choice. You find yourself in a small clearing. Various bits and pieces are scattered around and there for the taking. They include things like scrolls, coins and food. There's a pair of shoes too, but no other clothing. Could get a bit chilly.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. So, pick up what you think will serve you best, and enter the domain... There's plenty of bits and pieces lying around inside the dungeons that will help you on your quest, but you only have limited space in your backpack, so it's as well to choose carefully.

One thing that you will need is a weapon of some kind. There are monsters around and they're not here after your autograph.

The dungeons are represented as a 3D maze. You wander around by clicking on arrows. There are loads of doors, which can be opened with the press of a button. Careful though – there could be something spooky behind any one of them!

Anyone who's played *Dungeon Master* or *Bloodwych* will have no trouble getting to grips with *The Mystic Well* as it's very much in the same genre. You can play one of four characters, from fighter to wizard. Each has its own set of attributes, strength, intelligence and so on. These are 'rolled' randomly by the computer at the start of the game, so it's best not to choose a fighter if you end up with a strength of one and an intelligence of 15.

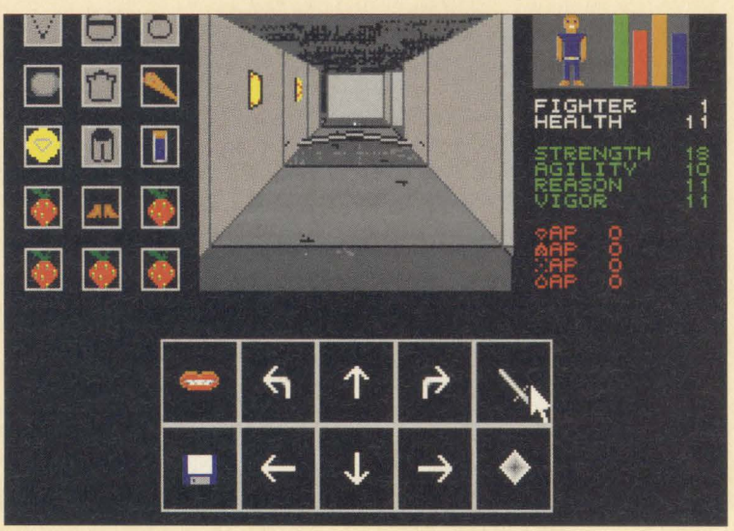
Most of the beasties you encounter early on are 'orrible great orange maggots with fangs. They can be killed easily enough, but don't hang around – if they bite you too many times then you're gonna be a gonner.

After you've given the beasties a good slaughtering, it's just as well to regain some vital energy. Substance in the form of food and water will patch you up better than a bottle of Dettol and a tub of antiseptic cream any day.

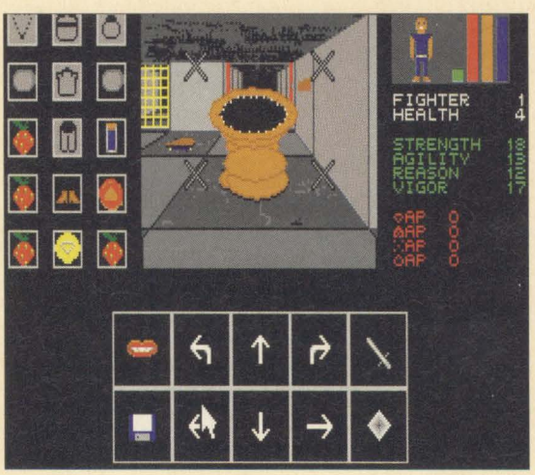
The more fighting or spell-casting or whatever your main virtues are, the greater the amount of experience you'll accumulate. Picking up treasure not only makes you wealthy; you'll also be that little bit more worldly-wise.

The Mystic Well is a great *Dungeons & Dragons*-style role-playing game. It has an enormous amount of depth – I suspect my initial forays only scratched the surface. It'll be a long time before you discover the true secrets of *The Mystic Well*.

ST 88%



A quick slash will disperse many a monster. It's quite a spooky feeling when you find yourself face-to-face with one. Who knows what's around the next bend?



What a big mouth you've got. All the better to decapacitate you with! A fanged fiend wants to give you a big, sloppy kiss

Jumpman Lives

(Shareware)

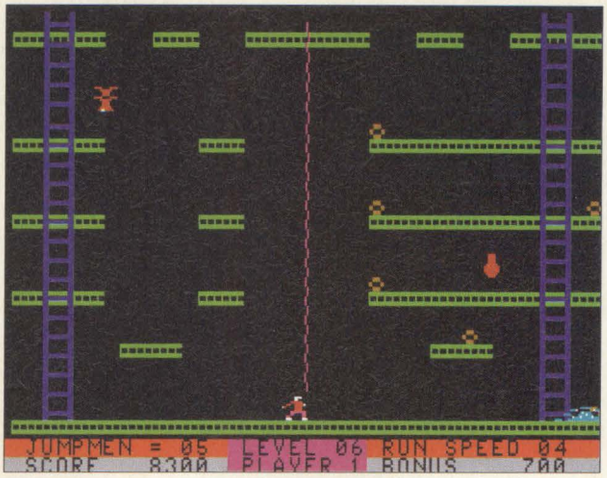
PC • GA144 • PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

They don't make 'em like they used to. Aha! That's where you're wrong! *Jumpman Lives* is a platform and ladders game very much in the traditional early 80s vein, ie it looks crap but plays great!

The plot's best forgotten – it's some nonsense about disarming bombs laid by terrorists inside the planet Saturn. You play the part of Jumpman. Your task is to collect a number of things (they're supposed to be bombs, but they look more like *things*) from every screen. Collect them all and you're through to the next level.

There's the usual assortment of nasties intent on stopping you dead (very dead) in your tracks. Unfortunately you have little defence against many of the monsters and your only hope is evasive action.

For someone called Jumpman you're not terribly good at jumping. Sure, you can negotiate the odd gap between platforms, but miscalculate and you plunge to your doom. It's your landings that really need some practice done on them.



The graphics may be prehistoric, but the playability puts many modern games to shame. Classic platform action from a bygone era

There are tons of levels. After every five screens you can save your progress to disk. This means that you don't have to replay previously-conquered levels. The different stages are quite varied, and you need to learn a different set of skills to get through each one.

Although *Jumpman* looks like a real oldie, it isn't. This version of the game has been written comparatively recently, and supports joystick interfaces and sound cards. It's no mistake that the game looks so ancient either; the programmers have tried – successfully – to give it the true feel of those early computer classics.

The graphics are chronic. Stick man, stick monsters and stick platforms! However, it's as addictive as chocolate chip cookies to a fat kid. You have no alternative but to keep coming back for more, and no doubt will get through pots of midnight oil in the process. A great game, just as long as your friends don't catch you playing it!

PC **80%**

cont. on p42

A kick in the kidneys, a chop in the chops. Orientals do it with style

Kung Fu Louie

(Shareware)

PC • 4280 (3 disks) • Softcell Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna, Pontyclun CF7 9PZ ☎ 0443 238630

The orientals take their scrapping seriously. Not a brawl outside a pub or a thumping in the playground for them. These guys have taken fighting to an art form.

Martial arts, quite simply, mean giving someone a jolly good pasting with style. Fancy kicks in the head, graceful punches in the guts, elegant head-butts to the temples – they may look good but they hurt like hell.

Kung Fu Louie has a grudge to bear. Why? I don't know, but let's take it for granted that he's looking for a fight. And that's exactly what he gets. Lots of them.

We start in the park. Louie has to give three dudes who dare to mess with him a damn good hiding. Luckily they're gentlemen, and take their punishment one at a time rather than surrounding him and beating seven shades of hell out of him, which, to be honest, is what me and my gang (the PD Pulverizers) would do (actually, I'd probably stand at the back and watch others do the dirty work).

Kick their heads in and progress to the subway. Here there are five guys to rumble with. Dispose of them successfully and it's onto streets of the city. Here we have some guys who are just asking for it. After another walloping we're outside the hotel. And there's *more* blows to be exchanged...

By now, things are getting rather repetitive, which describes *Kung Fu Louie* rather accurately. There's so little variety to the game. The backgrounds may change, but the 'action' doesn't.

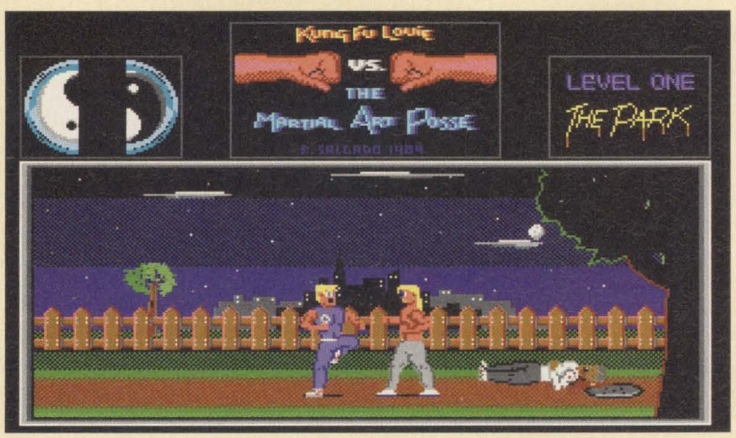
Louie knows a number of fighting moves, selected by four keys on the keyboard. And he's not just a pretty face either; he can manage to walk left and right too.

To land a blow on your adversary you have to be pretty close to him and so run the danger of being slapped in the face yourself. It seems pretty random whether fighting moves land a blow or not. A reasonable strategy is to continuously punch at any old key in the hope that it does the damage.

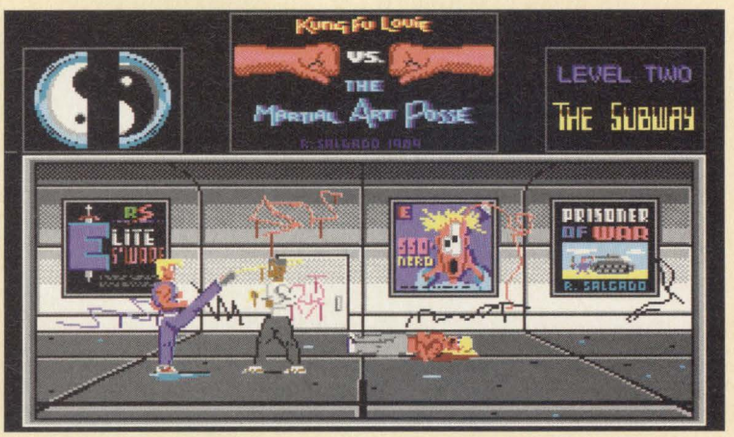
It's a professional-*looking* program. The sprites are large, and there's some nice touches, such as dead victims lying in a pool of blood when you've done 'em over. Sound, too, is good, and the game has been programmed to work in conjunction with the Adlib sound card, should you be lucky enough to have one.

For a game that comes on three disks, *Kung Fu Louie* has about as much variety as a *Little and Large* sketch. Every section is the same, and random key-prodding does not make for a good game. The polish is there. Unfortunately the gameplay isn't.

PC **53%**



It's a bit of an unfair fight, really. There's one of me and only three of them. I suppose I'll just have to give them a chance by hopping on one leg throughout the fight



Have I trodden in something nasty? When you render a guy unconscious he lies in a congealed pool of blood as his life slips slowly away. I hope you're proud of yourself

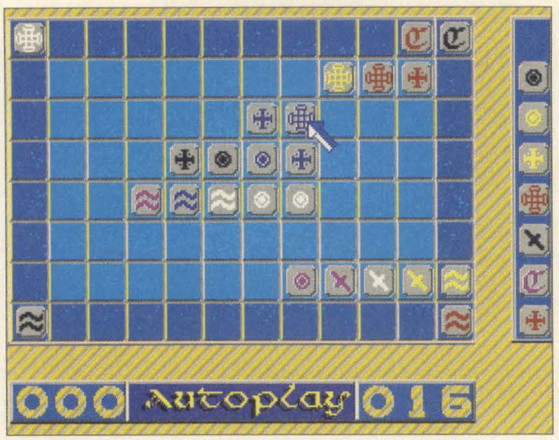
cont. from p41

Touchstones (Licenceware)

Amiga • Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 495261

Touchstones is one of those games for brainy people. Instead of performing ninja kicks and chops or blasting aliens from outer space with plasma beams, it's more a case of sitting down and being very patient and thinking a lot between every move you make.

The game is played by plonking down tiles on a board. There are a number of tiles. Each has a symbol and is of a certain colour. Points are scored by placing the pieces next to adjacent tiles, at least one of which must match in either colour or symbol. Points are scored by matching the tile with as many of the surrounding tiles as possible. The more matches the more you score: one match scores one point; two matches score two points; three matches score four points and should you get all four to match then you're awarded eight points.



Match the tiles in pattern and colour to score points. The more you match, the more you score, so strategy plays an important part

You can see the next 10 tiles coming your way, and so the crux of the game is studying what's to come and setting yourself up for as many high scoring matches as possible. This is all very well, but as a one-player game it's really little more than a complicated game of solitaire. Fine for whiling away a few moments of boredom, but little else.

The real fun starts when you play against a human opponent. Players take it in turns to place their pieces, and there's none of this 'setting up high scoring opportunities' type of business. Instead, it's very much part of the game to place tiles to be obstructive, so that it's *difficult* to score many points.

The 'Fourplay' mode takes things a stage further for a real battle of the brainboxes. Here, tiles are placed in groups of four, so that you can set up high scores for yourself and still have a couple of tiles left over to spoil things for your 'friend'.

Like many other activities, it's more fun with two. However, a lot of time is spent pondering, working out where best to place tiles to your advantage and the other person's disadvantage. It does mean that, in a serious game, a lot of thumb twiddling goes on while waiting for the other player to finish their turn.

Touchstones is well presented, with a choice of two different sets of graphics in which to display the board

Enter the nuclear era, with a Kill-O-Zap™ blaster and an attitude

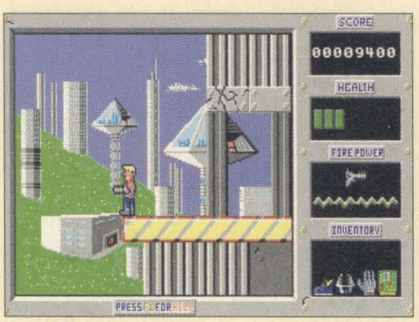
Duke Nukem (Shareware)

PC • GA138 • PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

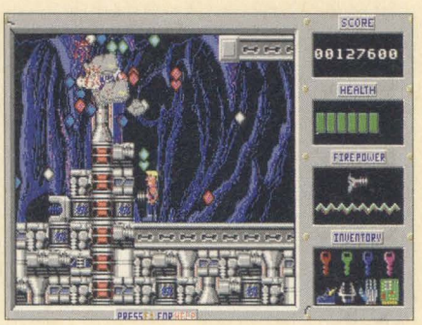
Why is it that whenever a power-crazed dictator tries to take over the World, it's always down to just one guy to stop him? I mean, surely it would be more sensible to send in tanks and planes and atom bombs? Still, ours is not to reason why. You are Duke Nukem, and your job description reads: "Ridding the World of power-crazed dictators single-handedly."

The dictator in question is eminent scientist Dr Proton, with a PhD in evil. But you've been taking night classes in kickin' ass. The esteemed Doctor isn't going to know what hit him!

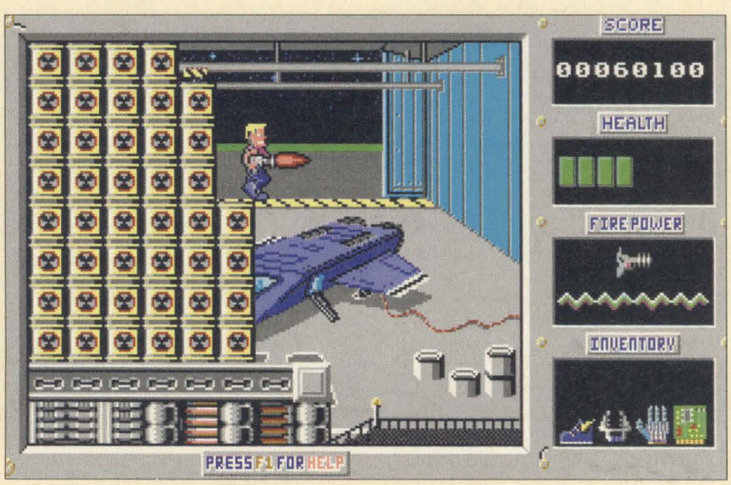
Doc P has a heavily-armed fortress, however. Damn! Last thing we knew he was holed up in a council house in Croydon. Oh well, there's a job to be done, and you're the man to do it. You're dropped into the combat zone by plane (and you don't even have a parachute, you're *that* hard). The action starts instantly, with killer robots and slimy green things that climb walls all over the place. They relieve you of energy on contact, so it's lucky you're armed with a Kill-O-Zap™ blaster.



Ah, it's a bit hairy in there. I think I'll 'keep guard', just in case anything tries to sneak up from behind



Aren't they pretty? Shooting things causes them to explode into lots of lovely colours



Eat this! Erm, 'scuse me for asking, Duke, but there doesn't appear to be anything there to shoot

It's an exploration game. There are several levels to get through before you come face to face with the sinister doctor. To find the exit to each you have to cut it through a lot of violence and mayhem – a lot of it caused by you, actually. You'll need to find keys to open locked doors, which are usually guarded by lots of unpleasant things.

It's not all nastiness, though, just mostly. Objects can be found all over the shop and have effects such as increasing your energy or adding to your score.

You have limited energy, and should you get killed you have to start the game over from the beginning of the level. This means that once you've completed a level you can breathe a sigh of relief as you can subsequently restart from the beginning of the level you reached. (In fact you can save the game between levels, so you'll never have to play through particularly tricky levels again. Hurrah!)

Duke is played in a large, scrolling area many times the size of the screen. The scrolling is very impressive, moving smoothly on top of a static background. In fact, the game is superb visually with lots of natty effects throughout. TV cameras track your every move. Booby-trapped chests give you but a couple of seconds to get away before a tongue of fire explodes along the platform.

And this game proves that PCs don't *have* to sound like a throttled gerbil. The fx are excellent, making good use of the machine's built-in speaker.

It's difficult to fault *Duke Nukem*, so I won't. It's technically excellent, with large, attractive sprites, smooth scrolling and good sound. The playability's there too, with plenty of hazards to get you, and definite aims to achieve. It's a corker!

PC **94%**

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cont. from p42

and stones. The two-player games can be quite good fun, but a lot of it relies on the luck of the draw. With two able players it's more to do with the tiles they get than their level of skill. Still, there's nothing like the random element to set the cat amongst the pigeons, is there?

AMIGA 82%

Hot Dog (Licenceware)

Amiga • 1201 • Amiganuts United,169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX

I've always thought burgers from fast food joints were pretty horrible, but that was because of the taste. When they mutate, they become particularly nasty. It brings a new meaning to the phrase 'Meat is Murder'.

I didn't realise that 'fast food' meant it ran all over the screen. I think I'm going to have to stick to vegeburgers from now on

Each stage is cleared, inexplicably, by shooting ketchup bottles. Destroy the lot and it's onto the next level. Hamburgers meander across the screen and can be shot for points. The real danger comes from a large saveloy and a bouncing rabbit that hops its way from left to right across the bottom of the screen. Should they reach the far side then you're a life down.

The graphics are tasty, the fast food is well-animated and the the game is very colourful. It may sound odd; that's because it is. It's very disjointed and pretty pointless. Sadly, *Hot Dog* is just not cookin'.

AMIGA 48%

Columns (Shareware)

PC • CIX bulletin board
☎ 081-399 5252

Tetris inspired a thousand puzzle games. *Columns* is number 823 (b).

Multi-coloured oblongs divided into three coloured blocks fall from the sky. As they make their way Earthwards, you can move them left and right and alter the order of the colours. Interesting enough in itself, but there is a point to all this: make a line of three blocks the same colour and the block disappears, scoring you points and making the game last that little bit longer.

The rows of three can run horizontally, vertically or diagonally. You only have the time it takes for the block to fall to work out in which position and in what order the colours

Holy shoot-'em-ups! It's cosmic comic capers with a cola-drinking hero

Captain Comic (PD)

PC • Eigen PD, PO Box 722, Swindon SN2 6YB.
☎ 0793 611270

What a bleedin' 'orrible racket! That's the first thing that hits you on loading *Captain Comic*. A string of bleeps that could only loosely be described as a tune introduces the game. Luckily, this disappears shortly after starting.

You play comic-book hero *Captain Comic*. Your task, which will undoubtedly save the World, consists of collecting three items scattered randomly around the large playing area.

This is done be running around and leaping a lot, which seems, pretty much, to be the extent of this super-hero's powers. That and the fact that drinking Coca Cola gives the man fireball-throwing abilities.

There are a number of creatures that need to be avoided, or shot. They tend to flutter about, none to intelligently, and don't really cause too much trouble.

Scattered around are various helpful objects. Cans of coke to boost your super-powers, keys to open doors, shields for extra lives and so on. Different sections of the game are reached by going through the doors and you can switch freely between. If you're killed, you're taken back to the last 'restart' point you visited.

The game scrolls horizontally, and does it quite smoothly at that. The graphics are bold and bright, and though they don't look particularly comicky, they serve their purpose well enough.

The trickiest aspect of the game is trying not to fall off the bottom of the screen. If you do it results in instant death. Collision with creatures saps your energy and so is less of a concern. It's more a game of learning from your mistakes than frantic arcade action.

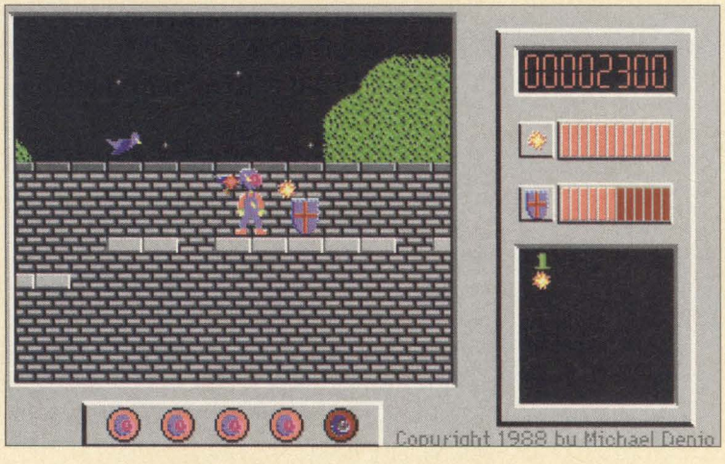
There are some neat touches. One section involves taking a rocket flight to the moon where you can make great leaps and bounds, much higher than you'd be able to do on Earth, thanks to the reduced gravity.

The keyboard layout would give an ambidextrous octopus trouble. To Fire, for instance, you have to hit the Insert key, while the Space bar is used to Jump, the cursor keys move you Left and Right and there are various other keys used for opening doors and the like. Try picturing all that lot on your keyboard! Maybe the game's programmer thought it would be too easy if you could actually control the character.

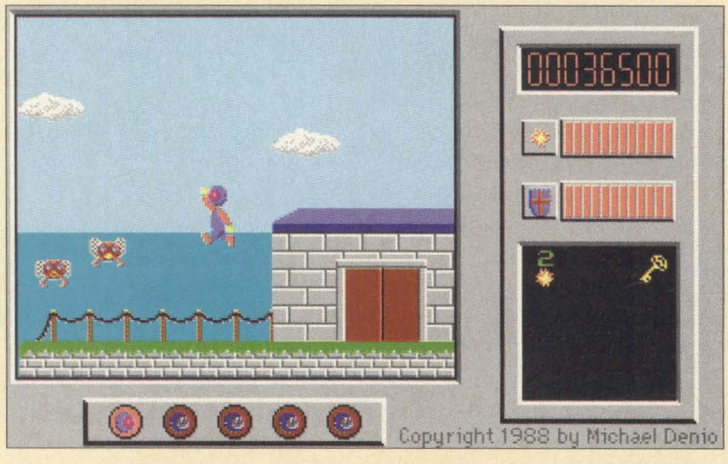
That aside, the game is a hell of a lot of fun. There are tons of screens to explore, and it'll take you some considerable time before you get to the end of the game.

Up, up and away!

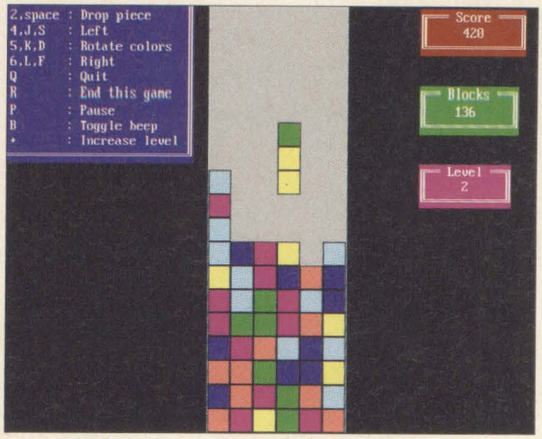
PC 85%



Geroff! Captain gets bitten by a budgie while shooting in the wrong direction. Luckily that shield will give him an extra life. He'll live to fight another day



Up, up and away! Captain Comic is particularly good at jumping over things. Not much of a super power really but I suppose we all have to make the most of what we've got



Manic *Tetris*-style action abounds in *Columns*. You can't rotate the shapes, but you can swap their colours around instead

should be to form a line. The time before touchdown is determined by the level you're playing at. The faster it gets the more frantic the game.

It takes a keen eye and even keener keyboard control to position the blocks correctly when the going gets tough. All possible combinations are checked when the block makes contact, so it's possible to get rid of blocks in more than one orientation at a time. Should disappearing blocks cause others to fall into threes, then they disappear too, so real clever clogs can show off by causing huge chain reactions (actually, this is more likely to be a fluke, but don't tell your friends that).

There are enough keyboard combinations to please even limbless Xorgons from Zokbar-2. The graphics are basic and clear, and sound is limited to a simple 'beep' when connecting rows are made.

It's a simple game, and like *Tetris*, an addictive one. You'll be getting it out of your collection frequently for 'just a quick five minutes'.

PC **83%**

Ballblazer (PD)

ST • Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness, IV2 4PT ☎ 0463 225736

There's this road, right, only it's in space and is full of holes. You have a bouncing ball and have to bounce it along the road without it falling through a hole and into the infinite depths of space. Sounds like a bit of a tall order if you ask me.

The ball is controlled with the joystick. A chequered road scrolls towards you. You have to manipulate the ball left and right to avoid the gaps. There are also a number of different coloured squares. These have various influences on the ball – should it hit one – such as making you do an extra big jump or reversing the joystick controls – as if things weren't bad enough already.

The road moves pretty swiftly – you certainly don't have to bother with any speed limits. Actually it moves so fast that you can't see what's happening until it happens, which means that you tend to end up dying quite a bit. Staying on the rails is a bit of a tricky task.

There are a number of roads to learn to drive on. You can opt to

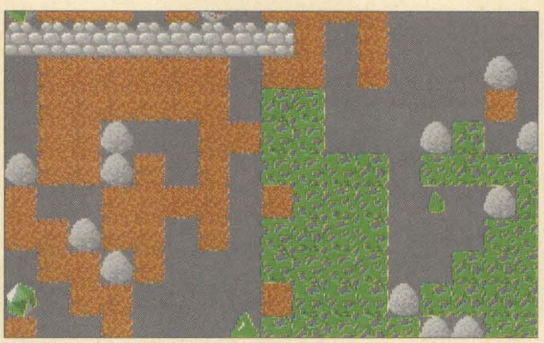
cont. on p46

The Rockford files • The Rockford files • The Rockford files • The Rockford files

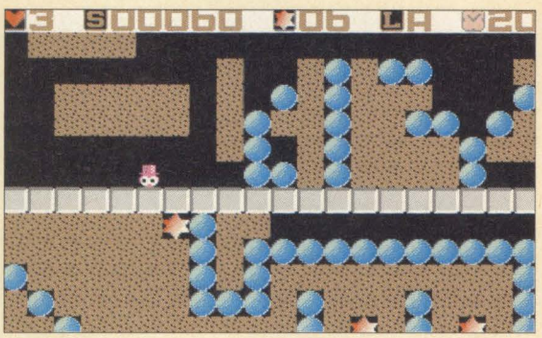
The best game ever written was *Boulderdash*. Any Commodore 64 owner will tell you that. It is set in a series of underground caverns filled with mud, boulders and diamonds. You tunnel through the mud while rocks plunge dangerously downwards towards you. And the diamonds? Well they're there for the taking!

There were a whole series of *Boulderdash* games, all starring Rockford as the diamond-hungry tunneller. The mixture of arcade action, brain-bending puzzles and more levels than the Empire State Building made it one of the most addictive games in the multiverse.

16-bit versions of the classic have been appearing in the public domain for quite a while. And here's a couple for the Amiga.



***Super Amidash*: yuk! Green slime takes over the screen in this recreation of one of the original *Boulderdash* levels**



***Cave Runner*: the rocks are round, the diamonds star-shaped and the monsters wear top hats. You're quite cute-looking, but you've just**

Super Amidash (Licenceware)

Amiga • 1038 • Amiganuts United,169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX

The 'Rockford' in *Super Amidash* is one cool customer. Most cave explorers would be sensibly decked out in a stout pair of hiking boots and a hard hat. But 'sensible' is for squares. It's Reeboks and a Dolphins baseball cap for this dude. Which is probably why he keeps getting killed by falling rocks.

There are 80 levels – a huge amount. What's more, these are made up from a mixture of the original *Boulderdash* screens plus an assortment of brand newies to challenge your pot-holing skills.

The graphics are great – much improved over the old 8-bit game. For a start, rather than flashing squares it has properly-animated monsters. The diamonds and rocks rotate as they tumble.

One neat feature is that your progress is recorded. You can replay the last cavern you reached again and again, even if you've switched off the game and subsequently restarted. There is a down side to this, though – you're rated on a games played/games won ratio. These statistics are recorded for posterity, and the fact that it's taken you 154 goes to get to level three is there for all to see.

The game does slow down slightly on some of the busier screens. Then again, with 100 billion monsters all moving around on-screen at once, what do you expect?

It's brilliant being able to play all those old screens again, and it's also good having new ones to provide a fresh challenge. Of course, if you've never played the original then you've got even more treats in store! *Amidash* captures the spirit of *Boulderdash*, adds polish and ends up being a stonker of a game.

AMIGA **94%**

Cave Runner (PD)

Amiga • 1014 • Vally PD, PO Box 15, Peterlee, Co Durham SR8 1NZ ☎ 091 587 1195

The hero of this underground adventure is a round blob with eyes, rather than a sentient being with arms and legs. This doesn't seem to cause him any problems burrowing through the mud, though – this guy's as adept at diamond-collecting as the best of them.

The graphics in this version are extremely smooth and sharp. Everything has a 'rounded' look, and you're collecting pretty impressive star-shaped jewels as opposed to those boring run of the mill diamonds. It may look quite different, but the gameplay's familiar.

There are a few additions to this game, though. Bombs explode when you drop things on them. Bubbles fall upwards. These variations add a novel twist

All your vital statistics are recorded at the top of the screen, so you can see how badly you're doing at a glance. It's all good, clean family fun!

AMIGA **82%**

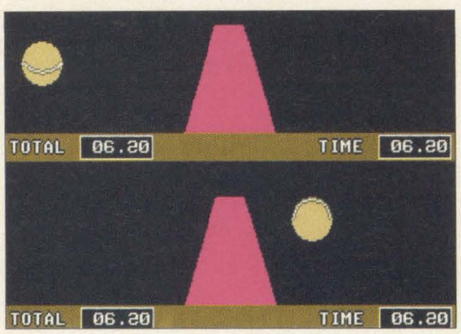
cont. from p45

attempt them in their proper order, or if you want you can have a go with them all jumbled up randomly, so you never know what's in store around the next bend.

Two can play simultaneously. This isn't as interactive as it sounds; you're driving on different roads and can in no way interfere with each other's progress. Boo!

To be honest, I found *Ballblazer* pretty unplayable. It runs too quickly to avoid things by reactions alone. Basically you have to rely on memory – it's one of those games where your only hope is to learn every twist and turn in detail. This means that it takes a very long time before you get proficient enough to complete even the first road. It'll probably end up driving you up the wall!

ST 68%



Two players can take the *Ballblazer* challenge simultaneously so you can both fall off the road at the same time

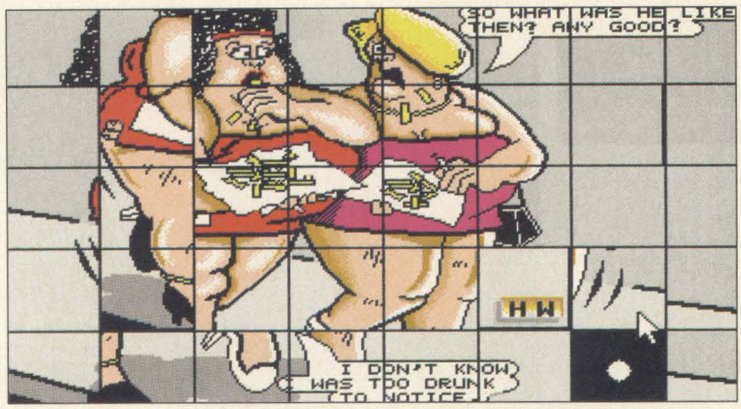
Happy Puzzle

(Licenceware)

ST • BU33 • Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness, IV2 4PT ☎ 0463 225736

It's Christmas again, and one thing I'll guarantee you'll find lurking in the bottom of your stocking or inside a Christmas cracker is one of those little plastic tile-sliding puzzles.

The idea is simply to rearrange the muddled-up pieces of the puzzle into the correct order. This is done by sliding the squares into a gap. Traditionally these puzzles depict some picture or other (though the more boring ones have the numbers 1 to 15 printed on them instead).



What's this? Ah, it's those two lovable *Viz* characters, *Johnny Fartpants* and *Buster Gonad*

This program works with pictures drawn in either *NeoChrome* or *Degas Elite* format. There are a number of pictures on the disk, the majority of which are, ahem, a bit saucy. There's a picture of a racing car and *Viz* magazine's *Fat Slags* as well. Once you've become bored of putting those back together then those of you with an artistic streak can give their own pictures the treatment.

You can select how muddled up the pictures are; there's a choice of three levels. One bugbear is that you see how the pictures were before the big mix-up. It might have been a nice surprise *not* to have seen the piccie beforehand. It seems to defeat the object somehow.

Happy Puzzle is based on a very simple toy, and so you get a very simple program. If you fear the inevitable Taiwanese terror ending up amongst your loot, you'd be better off asking Santa's little helpers to phone up a PD library instead.

ST 75%

A wet and windy day? Lost all your tiddly-winks? Your ST has the answer...

Compendium

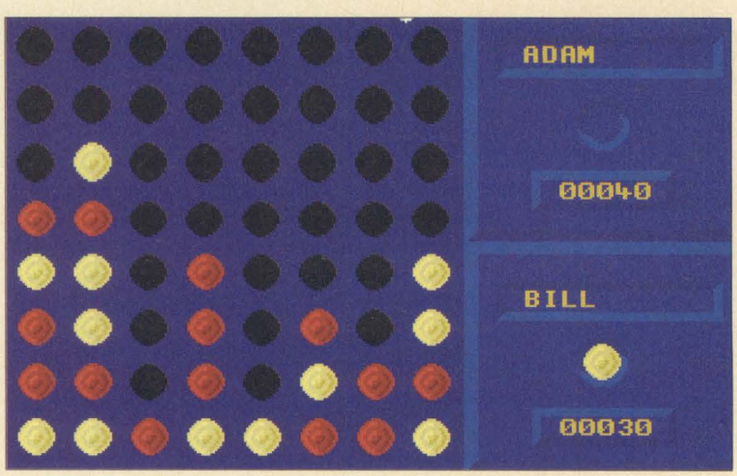
ST • 1369 • Goodman's PDL 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650

Remember those compendium game sets that you always used to get when you went on holiday when you were a kid? You know, you're in a caravan in Skegness. It's pouring down with rain and you've been whingeing all day long that you're bored. Dad comes back from the camp site shop clutching a soggy cardboard box with *The Family Compendium* written on it. Inside are a collection of perforated pieces of cardboard, badly-moulded bits of plastic and a dice with barely visible spots justifies the £7.95 price tag.

Compendium is a bit like that. There are eight brain-games to play, including *Battleships, Connect 4, Draughts* and *Pontoon*. A picture of a portable ST with built-in LCD screen appears. Names have to be typed in by clicking on the keys with the mouse. This looks pretty, sure, but it would have been a lot easier if you could simply type the letters in.

Then it's onto the betting stage. Depending on how clever you think you are, you can bet on whether you will win the game. If you do, you get double your stake back. Frankly, I thought this was a bit of a waste of time, but then I'm not the gambling type.

That was a close escape! Your neck was saved by guessing the word set by your opponent. Next time we'll try the Hillman Imp



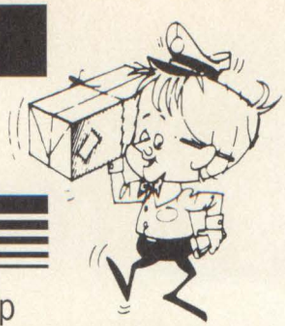
***Compendium*: I've won! No you haven't! Let the computer take away the need to argue by spotting those four-in-a-row winning lines before you do**

The drawback is that it's strictly two-player only. The computer acts as nothing more than an intelligent game board; it will alert you when you've won, but that's the limit of its braininess.

The games themselves are OK, but nothing you couldn't do with a scrap of paper. It seems a bit hasslesome to load up the computer for a quick game of noughts and crosses. The lack of a computer-player option is a serious omission, making the whole thing pretty pointless. Unless you're intending to take your ST with you next time you go on your Summer hols, forget it.

ST 63%

BYTEBACK



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AG.04 **Monopoly;** full version of the classic property trading game!
AG.05 **Pacman 87;** Multi level version of this addictive arcade classic.
AG.06 **Various;** Cosmoroids, Amoeba, Blackjack, Backgammon, Yahtzee etc.
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AG.18 **Golden Fleece;** Infocom quality adventure, Tron, Train, Star Fleet.
AG.22 **Return to Earth;** Elite style Space Trading game, digitised sound.
AG.24 **Drip;** Arcade quality painter game, China Challenge, Frogger etc.
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AG.30 **Twintris;** Superb shape dropping game! MUCH better than original! (*)
AG.31 **Simpsons;** vertical scrolling shoot-em-up style game! (SEUCK)
AG.32 **Legotris;** another Tetris style game, amusing digitised sound effects.
AG.34 **Tile Game;** AMOS games creator variation on the old 16 puzzle.
AG.35 **Cave Runner;** Commercial quality Boulderdash style game! Excellent!
AG.36 **Wizzys Quest;** Professional quality arcade puzzle game.
AG.38 **Star Trek - Arcade game;** SEUCK produced scrolling shoot-em-up.
AG.39 **Wacko in Wonderland;** Platform game with large Graphics! Cute!
AG.40 **Metagalactic Llamas;** Classic Commodore 64 game by Jeff Minter
AG.42 **Games Galore;** Star Trek, Trivia, Pharoahs Curse, Monopoly, Mazeman, Roll On, Dad, Cosmo 2, Cat and Mouse.
AG.43 **Gridrunner;** Classic Jeff Minter shoot-em-up, Rebound; Arkanoid style, Invaders; Space Invaders version.
AG.44 **Sorry;** The board game, Flipper, Missile, Blackjack,Video Poker etc.

GAMES (continued)

AG.45 **Seven Tiles;** Superb speedball style game with digitised effects!
AG.46 **Megaball;** Brilliant Arkanoid style game with Editor!
AG.48 **Diplomacy;** War Strategy game.
AG.49 **Eat Mine;** Emerald Mine copy, 80 levels of brain straining action.
AG.50 **Master of the Town;** Shooting Gallery. Smash Windows, etc. (*)
AG.51 **Frantic Freddy;** Platform game, good conversion of C64 favourite!
AG.52 **Block It;** Superb Puzzle game!
AG.53 **Nakamoto;** Great Platform game.
AG.54 **Downhill Skiing;** Classic game.
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AD.39 **Agatron animations;** 3D film of USS Enterprise attacking USS Reliant.
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A taste for adventure

And lo, it came to pass that the public domain became the final haven for the endangered species of computer game known as the text adventure. Paul Rigby chronicles their salvation...

Text adventures have been going through a rough time in the last few years. When computers first burst onto the home market in early 80s they were among the most popular forms of games software. But scan the shelves of your local WH Smith's or Menzies today and you're just aslikely to find Salmon Rushdie peeking from between the copies of *Lemmings* and *Laser Squad* as finding a decent, classical text adventure.

But the genre remains well and truly alive and kicking in the public domain thanks to a dedicated and ever-growing group of adventure enthusiasts. They write their own games, often with the help of specially-designed games creation utilities, and release them through PD libraries. And while narrow-minded full-priced games players might sniffily disregard the text adventure as old fashioned, most of these 'home-made' games are great fun to play, and, in some cases, they display a level of ingenuity, playability and humour often missing from their commercial rivals.

Escaping to new worlds

Adventure games are all about role playing. You are thrust into a fictional world or situation – anything from present day earth to an alien spaceship in the far distant future or anywhere else the warped mind of a game's writer can come up with – there's nothing to stop them creating an adventure set in swiss cheese mine or somebody's arteries. The player takes on the role of some suitable character and is given a task or quest to complete. So, for example, if you were playing the 'artery' adventure, you might find yourself in the role of a white cell that has to stop an evil virus from reaching your host body's heart.

Along the way you have to solve a number of puzzles designed by the author to hinder your progress, and you also have to look out for useful clues that might help you in your task. Interaction with other characters in the game is also possible – talk to them and you might find out some vital information; alternatively, it might be a better idea to run them through with a sword before they do the same to you. Deciding which course of action is more appropriate is often the key to winning the game.

There are three main types of text-based adventures. The text-only adventure will just use text to describe the scene. Other adventures illustrate their text with a static picture. More advanced versions may include minimal animation in their illustrations – doors opening, arms waving, magicians appearing from no-where, that sort of thing.

The game world consists of a number of 'locations'. These can be rooms, corridors, streets,

In the beginning, there was a colossal cave...

The first adventure game was written by Crowther and Woods way back in the early 70s. Called simply *Adventure* (though it is more commonly and affectionately referred to as *Original Adventure* these days) it was at the time the largest computer program ever written, though today it will easily fit on an Atari 520ST.

The game was written in the archaic FORTRAN programming language for mainframe computers and was never actually sold commercially – there wasn't exactly a big market for computer games in the the early 70s.

The setting for the game is a labyrinth of underground caves. Crowther, who graduated from the University of Massachusetts in 1953 with a BSc in Physics, had a closer relationship with caves than many people think. He actually worked for the cave research foundation (CRF). In the late 60s the CRF conducted scientific research and produced maps of caves for the National Park Service in the USA. During his four year service with the CRF Crowther spent much of his time in Kentucky mapping one particular cave – Mammoth Cave. And, surprise, surprise, the first map for *Original Aventure* actually matches precisely part of Mammoth Cave!

These days there are many versions available in the public domain, such as *Colossal Caves* on the Amiga (available from Merry Vale PD). It has been updated and improved, but the basic plot and puzzles remain the same and it's still great fun.

forest clearings, mountain plateaus, chambers of the heart, lunar craters or any other area that the writer deems suitable for their adventure. Each location is 'described' by a section of text which can vary in length and quality of prose depending on the location and the literary pretensions of the author. Some descriptions bear the stamp of an illiterate five-year-

"The player is thrust into a fictional world which can be set anywhere from present day earth to an alien spaceship in the far distant future."

old while others read like the pages of a bestselling book, dragging you into the atmosphere of the game. Half a page of concise, informative text is usually what you'll find, though, and this is quite sufficient.

An understanding computer

The system by which the computer understands what you type in is called the parser. Some parsers are very basic with the vocabulary of a moderately verbose parrot, while others are capable of understanding a wide range of words and grammar. For example, with your bog standard parser if you want to pick up a bag, a stone and a book you have to type in:

```
Pick up bag
```

then

```
Pick up stone
```

then

```
Pick up book
```

pressing return after each. Laborious or what? A more advanced parser will let you type in

```
Pick up all
```

Better parsers will also recognise synonyms, so that you can also call a rock either a stone or a pebble and the parser will still know what you're on about.

Movement in adventures is usually based on compass points. Most adventure games only give you the option of going north, east, south, west, up or down, though a few might allow for such instruction as north-west and south-east. So you might yourself in a room and the text description says:

```
There are two exits to the north and
south. Which way do you want to go?
```

If you came in through the south door chances are you'll want to leave through the other one so all you have to do is type in something along the lines of 'Go North' or 'North' or simply 'N' to go that way. Some adventures let you use the cursor keys to choose in which direction you want to move.

Into action

To show how this works in practice let's take a typical adventure situation – the classic story of a knight in shining armour who's about to attempt to rescue his beloved Princess. Unfortunately, the Princess is imprisoned in a small garden shed which lies among a cabbage patch. The Knight, which is the character that you control, sits on his horse among some bare grassland. Between the lovers lies a wide river.

Here we have four main locations – the bare grassland, the river, the cabbage patch and the garden shed. As you enter each location text will pop up on screen giving you a description of the terrain, any objects to be found in the location, the directions in which you can move and any additional information which will probably be superfluous to completing the game but will help make it a more rounded and enjoyable experience. You can usually pick up and examine any of the objects listed.

The principle puzzle, in this example, is to rescue the Princess. But there are other puzzles to work out

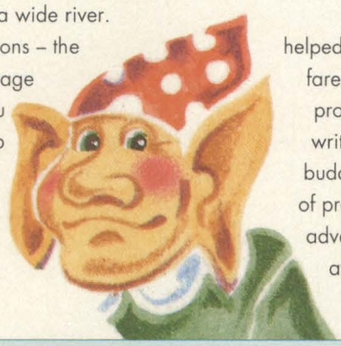
"Some location descriptions bear the stamp of an illiterate five-year-old while others read like the pages of a bestselling book."

before that final scene can take place. How do you cross the river? What about that angry troll who lives in the cabbage patch ? How do you open the locked door to the garden shed when you don't have the key? This is the challenge of an adventure game.

PD to the rescue

So why has the PD arena become so popular for adventure authors? Public domain ST adventure writer Richard Lee, offers an explanation:

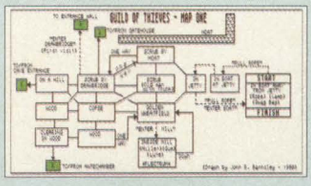
"Most people who play adventures at one time or another get the idea of writing their own and, very often they enjoy doing that just as much as playing them. While the commercial adventure houses are facing financial difficulties, adventure games are not selling enough copies to be viable. But if you write for PD or Shareware, and you only get 20 people playing your game and they enjoy it then the game is a success. Over 400 people could buy your commercial adventure and it will still be a flop on grounds of production costs, initial investment and advertising."



Game creation utilities have also helped make adventure games popular PD fare. Basically databases, these are programs which simplify the chore of writing text adventures and enable budding writers with a limited knowledge of programming to concoct fully-fledged adventures. There are full-priced versions available, but there are also some fine Shareware and PD game creation

cont. on p50

If at first you don't succeed... cheat



Map disks like these ones for *The Eye Of the Beholder* (left) and *Guild Of Thieves* (right) help out lost souls wandering aimlessly around adventure games

If you find that your adventuring tastes do lead you astray and you start to play – gulp – commercial games, then the public domain still has something to offer you: cheat disks and map disks. These give you hints and tips, and sometimes even complete solutions, to help you through some of the more popular full price adventures (*Corruption, Guild of Thieves, Jinxter, Eye of the Beholder*, you name it) on all formats. Map disks give you schematic representations of the areas in the games showing you how they all relate to each other. This saves all that tedious checking out every single room and having to scrawl your own maps on a dog-eared note pads.

You might call it cheating, or you might call it desperation, but the fact remains that these disks are available. Will you be able to resist the temptation when you still haven't found that secret key after a two month search?

cont. from p49

utilities that do the job just as well, such as *The Adventure Game Toolkit*.

John R Barnsley of the ST Adventurers' Club is in no doubt about the effect of such programs on the PD scene: "As long as you can use a word processor you can write an adventure on one of these utilities. The only real difficulty is getting the puzzles together." And success in this area depends more on your imaginative powers than your programming skills.

Starved Amiga

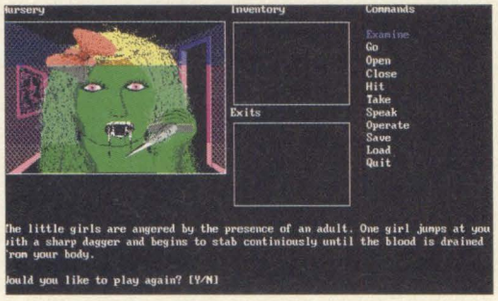
Ironically, the effect of these programs have had is best displayed by the fact that there are so few Amiga PD adventures. There are well over 100 ST and 60 PC programs readily available from libraries, but you won't have to pull both your socks off to find enough digits to count up the number of Amiga PD adventures. The main reason for this is that the Amiga does not have a well-known, widely used adventure creation utility on offer. There are one or two adventure utilities on the PD library lists but they suffer from a lack of user-friendliness or features. The ST has the *STAC* and *AGT* and the PC also has its version of *AGT*. The Amiga's offerings largely consist of PC ports to a 'proper' Amiga language such as C. No easy-to-use utilities, though.

But with or without a decent PD adventure game scene on the Amiga, the text adventure continues to thrive in the public domain. So to help you in your quest to discover the thrill of PD adventure gaming on your machine here's a diverse selection of some of the best, and more unusual adventures available in the Public Domain.

Last Half Of Darkness (Shareware)

PC • 2606 • PD & Shareware Library, Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1UL
☎ 0892 663298

Last Half of Darkness is a text adventure with some superb EGA graphics. You have just inherited the estate of your recently deceased aunt, who used to be some sort of witch. Your inheritance is conditional on you continuing her studies. Apparently she was working on a miraculous potion before she died.



***Last Half of Darkness* contains graphics and some simple animations to create a game that rivals any full-priced competitor**

Unless you find the missing ingredients the secret (and your dosh) will go to the grave with her.

This game supports the Covox speech board. It looks similar, while being simplified, to the new commercial games being produced by Legend and Magnetic Scrolls or even the old Infocom classics. This is primarily because you can play the game without ever using the keyboard. For example, click on the word `Open' in the word list and click on a door in the graphic window. Then you'll see a small piece of animation as the door opens. You also see an overhead graphical representation of the available exits (you can click on these too). The function keys can also be used for command entry.

Presentation is divided up into areas. You get a graphic window, location description box, exits window and word listing.

Last Half of Darkness could easily retail at £25.00 and no-one would ever complain. Do yourself a favour and get this game!

PC 88%

Midnight Thief (PD)

Amiga • G311 • STRICTLY PD
11 York Place, Hotwells, Bristol BS1 5UT

If you've played the full-priced game *Guild of Thieves* then you'll be well into this. *Midnight Thief* is set in the fantasy city of Crowthorn, where life and time is short. The game starts with you being hired by a shadowy character called Harlequin to find some rather exotic items.

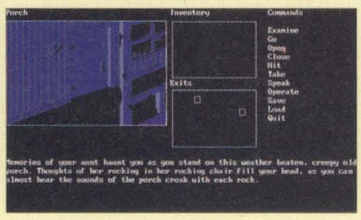
Crowthorn is bustling with life, and there are plenty of places to go and people to meet. These range from the foul-mouthed Tenderpaunch Gutbucket to some rather stereotyped city watch guards. You can easily get lost without a map, as a lot of the city streets differ only slightly.

If *Midnight Thief* does have a problem it's that the written descriptions seem padded out sometimes. There is an option to make them long or short, though, so moving through areas you already know about need not be slow. Featuring some good if small graphics of the locations *Midnight Thief* has

Your step by step guide to The Last Half of Darkness (how t

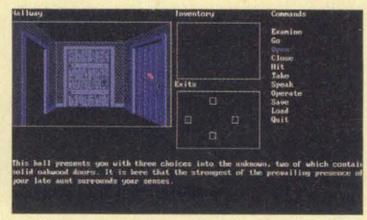
Front Yard
Inventory
Commands
Examine
Go
Open
Close
Hit
Take
Speak
Operate
Save
Load
Quit
Exits
The moonlight of a full moon illuminates the front of this ghostly house once owned by your great aunt. A strong breeze causes the trees to brush against the sides of the house, making strange sounds. There is a light on in the attic. Better check it out!

1 So this is aunty's place, eh? Bit creepy, innit? Hello, what's that attic light doing on? Wasn't the house supposed to be empty? Better take a closer look. Note the box headed exit. If you click on the tiny box in the top left you'll be instantly transported to the front door .

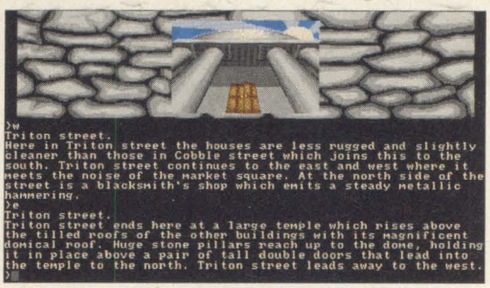


2 Right, here we are. But the door is closed. OK, just select OPEN – third from the top in the list on the right – from from the menu then move the mouse to the door. Click on it and Presto! The door's open. OK, deep breath and in we go.

3 Urrgh. Cobwebs and things, everywhere. Clock's stopped too. It's not a good idea to go up those stairs without a light on so follow that corridor to the left. Just position the mouse over the GO command. Move the mouse to the doorway and you're away.



4 What's behind those doors? Hope there's no ghosts or any stuff like that! OK, just move the mouse over to the OPEN command again, then position it over the door, click and it opens. Do the same with the GO command to enter the room.


>w
Triton street.
Here in Triton street the houses are less rugged and slightly cleaner than those in Cobble street which joins this to the south. Triton street continues to the east and west where it meets the noise of the market square. At the north side of the street is a blacksmith's shop which emits a steady metallic hammering.
>e
Triton street.
Triton street ends here at a large temple which rises above the tiled roofs of the other buildings with its magnificent domical roof. Huge stone pillars reach up to the dome, holding it in place above a pair of tall double doors that lead into the temple to the north. Triton street leads away to the west.
>

Wandering the streets of Crowthorn is enjoyable, but it's important to find out where you need to go next

had a lot of time spent on it by the programmer (Dylan Thomas). Rather than starting with, 'a life and death situation from which you must escape' – the typical adventure scenario – *Midnight Thief* treats you as an average citizen ready to seek out a bit of adventure for financial reward. Fun.

AMIGA 82%

Into The Mystic (Licenceware)

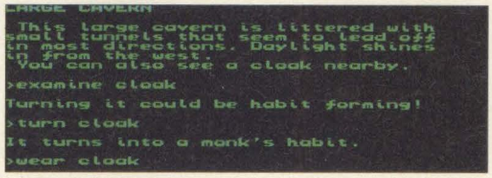
ST • Zen 13 • Merry Vale PD
32 Merrivale Road, Rising Brook, Stafford ST 17 9EB

"Where has all the magic gone?" and, "Without magic our lives are empty and void," were typical of the cries to be heard throughout the countryside. Lose something and you must find it. Hence you have been nominated, by Merlin (who else?) to find out what the Sam Hill is going on and where all the magic has gone to. So off you trot.

Now Orcs are a pain in the armpit. Ratty y'know. Mean too. Oh, and they have a thing about tearing people limb from limb. But, hey – nobody's perfect, right? And guess what? They're in hot pursuit, chasing you through the forest. After resting from the chase you awake the next morning to find the Orcs blocking your escape route! What to do?

The principle feature of *ITM* is the puzzle quality which is, on the whole, very high. There are one or two real brain teasers in there. I especially enjoyed the first puzzle which is quite logical once you've worked it out, of course.

Technically, the game is not the most advanced adventure ever. Writer Jack Lockerby is not known for his technical achievements. Instead, he has a well


LARGE CAVERN
This large cavern is littered with small tunnels that seem to lead off in most directions. Daylight shines in from the west.
You can also see a cloak nearby.
>examine cloak
Turning it could be habit forming!
>turn cloak
It turns into a monk's habit.
>wear cloak

Magic elves and enchanted forest are staple elements of adventure games and *Into the Mystic* has the lot

deserved reputation for producing well-designed, very playable adventures that provide a hours of enjoyment. *Into the Mystic* is a very good example.

ST 80%

SHYMER (Licenceware)

Amiga • LPD30 • Déjà Vu
25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs WN6 7AA
☎ 0942 495261

You are Shirley Coombes, intrepid part time investigator for the great Sherlock Holmes himself. *Shymer*'s setting is Nursree Island, a distinctly odd place populated by characters from nursery rhymes.

Aimed at children, *Shymer* offers a simple game with lots of iffy – but quite appealing – graphics and short text passages. You can choose to use the Amiga's speech synthesiser to read some of the text out aloud. This speeds the game up slightly and helps keep youngsters interest, because there's less work for them to do.

The goals in *Shymer* are nothing new – you've been shipwrecked on the island, and have to repair your boat to escape. There are a couple of other plots though. For one thing, your faithful cat Dok Wot San has disappeared and you have to find him.

The main aim in in the game is to unravel some twisted nursery rhymes. In order to do this the player needs to know at least some nursery rhymes. Unfortunately many kids today don't know any at all, which is going to limit its appeal. Alright, so it's not everyone's cup of tea, but *Shymer* does have some odd interludes to break up the system. In design and execution it's very appealing, and points to an alternative style for educational software.

AMIGA 63%

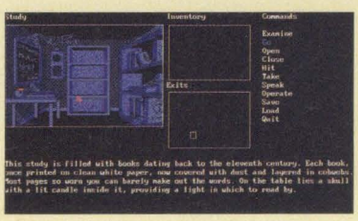
Cortizone (Licenceware)

ST • Zen 2 • Merry Vale PD
32 Merrivale Road, Rising Brook, Stafford ST 17 9EB

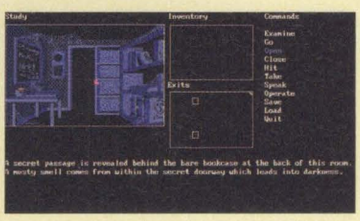
Cortizone 's plot concerns a building called the Zone, a hospital which was converted after the great war to hold both human and robotic criminals at little expense to the weakened government. Conditions

cont. on p52

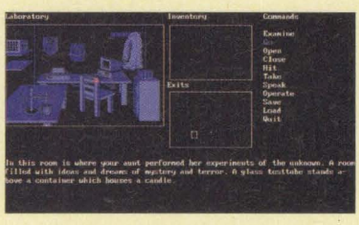
lay it, that is, not the solution – that's up to you to find out)


Study
Inventory
Commands
Examine
Go
Open
Close
Hit
Take
Speak
Operate
Save
Load
Quit
Exits
This study is filled with books dating back to the eleventh century. Each book, once printed on clean white paper, now covered with dust and layered in cobwebs. Most pages so worn you can barely make out the words. On the table lies a skull with a lit candle inside it, providing a light in which to read by.

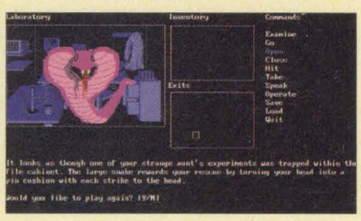
5 Phew! Here we are then. Good job there weren't any ghosts. Books and more books. Hmmmm, that bookcase looks suspicious. We've all seen enough Agatha Christie and Ruth Rendell on TV – let's see what's behind it. First use the GO command to move towards it.



6 Using the OPEN command on the bookcase reveals a secret passage. Note that another exit has suddenly appeared at the top of the Exit box on the right. Oh well, we might as well investigate. Time to use that GO command again.



7 Hey, this is OK. Nice little den. Hmmm, let's have a nose around here. There's nothing in the inventory box on the right yet, and it's a good idea to pick up a few things. You never know when you might need them. Hmmm, what's in this drawer?



8 Oh dear. Perhaps we shouldn't have done that. Maybe it would have been a good idea to make use of the Examine command first. Too late now, though. But don't worry. At least you'll know what not to do next time. It's all part of the fun of adventure gaming.

cont. from p51

are barbaric as the inner building is mainly unguarded leaving prisoners to fight over the limited resources that are periodically dropped into the building via a supply chute. Your aim is to gain entry into the Zone by any means and find the mad doctor thought to be responsible for the creation of the dreaded Adrenal Bomb (containing bacterial poisons), while obtaining information to find and defuse this lethal weapon.

The adventure arrives on two disks. One disk is given over to the introduction. This is a novel method of offering you the plot in an interesting format. It informs you on all aspects of the background story via a continuous printout plus some small pictures.

Once this is finished you load the game from disk two. The game itself is divided into two windows. The upper window displays colour, digitised pictures. Beneath is the text area.

Cortizone is well-designed with some thoughtful features to create an enjoyable and polished game.

ST 89%

***Cortizone* is a spy thriller which makes use of digitised pictures of real locations to accompany the text**

Hugo II – Whodunnit? (Shareware)

(PC) • 2567 • PD & Shareware Library Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1UL ☎ 0892 663298

Hugo 2 is the sequel to the popular graphics adventure *Hugo's House of Horrors*. Hugo and his girlfriend Penelope become involved in a murder mystery with a couple of fiendish twists and a large helping of humour not to mention a revolving bookcase, a saucy French maid and a wicked murderer.

As in the original *Hugo* game this is a mixture of EGA quality graphics and text adventure. Play is similar to your average Sierra-type adventure. You move Hugo, the hero, around the screen with the cursor keys. When you manoeuvre Hugo to a door, for example, you can then input some text such as 'Open Door'. A small piece of animation is then seen as the door is opened.

***Hugo II* is the sequel to the brilliantly funny *Hugo's House of Horrors* reviewed last issue. It's a very intuitive program in which you use the cursor keys to move around**

Hugo 2 is a very professionally produced game. As this game is so graphically oriented, there is a problem with the text input area as you do not have a wide variety of synonyms. Therefore, you must choose the precise input in a number of cases which can become a little bit frustrating. Good fun, though. PD

PC 79%

Creating your own adventures

Adventure creation utilities have been a key element in making adventures so popular in the public domain, because they have made it easy for anyone to write adventure games. They eliminate the need for budding adventure writers to understand complex programming languages inside out.

```
;FLAGS, VARIABLES AND COUNTERS, ETC.
;Flag 0  Display CMD detail as it is being processed
;        enter DEBUG to toggle ON and OFF
;Flag 1  Bear is following if ON
;Flag 2  Bottle has liquid in it if ON, is empty if OFF
;Flag 3  Cave is closed if ON, open if OFF
;Flag 4  Troll has been paid off or frighten away if ON
;Flag 5  Lantern/Lamp is ON or OFF
;Flag 6  ON if it would be dark here if Lantern/Lamp is off
;Flag 7  ON if Lantern/Lamp has new set of batteries
;Flag 8  ON if crystal bridge currently exists
;Flag 9  NOT Using bare hands in attack if ON
;        also flag to indicate axe or knife is being thrown
;        also numerous temporary other uses
;Flag 10 Dwarf is in room if ON
;Flag 11 Pirate has stolen treasure if ON
;Flag 12 Hint about location of cave has been offered if ON
;Flag 13 Toggle flag for different responses to GET BIRD
;Flag 14 Toggle flag for different commands about SNAKE
;Flag 15 Has angered programmer if ON
;Flag 16 Programmer has given secret word if ON
;Flag 17 Cave is in process of closing if ON
```

With *AGT* all he variables – such as whether a certain character will be in a certain room at various points in the game – are listed in one file

Basically adventure creation utilities are a collection of inter-related databases or, rather, a database of interlinked files. An empty file is like an empty room, and you have to fill it with the relevant information for your adventure. So, for example, if you want to write a fantasy adventure, you might need a torture chamber (as most of them do). You will need to describe what the room looks like – square, dark, dank-smelling – what it contains – a rack, thumbscrews, a television showing Wogan and Iron Maiden (yes we do mean the rock group) – and whether anyone else is in the room. You also have to indicate the available exits, and to where they lead. Some systems will also let you add a graphical representation of the location. All of these elements are given a location number by the program.

So, when somebody plays your adventure and they step into the torture chamber, the computer checks the location number given for the torture chamber and then goes and fetches all the relevant information from its files that have that location number. For example, the atmospheric description text you wrote earlier is situated in the 'Description File', the objects are in the 'Object File' and so on. This is a very simplified description of the adventure utility and it all of this happens instantly.

The better adventure creators are, for the PC, Softworks' *AGT* (Shareware); for the ST there is *AGT* and *STAC* (a commercial program).

To say that there is a dearth of adventure creation utilities on the Amiga is an understatement. All the PD versions are pretty hopeless and even in the commercial sector the only major contender is *Hatrack II* (£29.95 from Heyley Software, 27 Winnington Road, Marple, Stockport, SK6 6PD) which is a fine program and deserves a bit more use. But isn't it about time some talented Amiga programmer came up with a stonking PD adventure creation utility?

ADVENTURE GAME TOOLKIT

ST VERSION available from Merry Vale PD, 32 Merrivale Road, Rising Brook, Stafford ST 17 9EB
PC VERSION available from PD & Shareware Library, Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1UL ☎ 0892 663298

Adventure Game Toolkit (or *AGT* as it's known to its friends) is, without doubt, the simplest, yet the most advanced adventure utility around.

Games can be produced in two levels. The Standard Level is the easiest to produce requiring no programming knowledge. The Professional Level adds a series of programming commands known as Meta-Commands.

The parser is very advanced. For example, type 'THROW ROCK AT THIEF' and then say 'ATTACK HIM' and the parser will know you mean the thief.

The four on-disk document files give an enormous amount of help. They include a couple of very handy macro utilities which ease your adventure creating even more. What these do is reduce a whole series of commands or operations so that the computer will perform them automatically at a single keystroke. And as well as containing the program the *AGT* disks (the PC version comes on two 5.25-inch floppies) also feature 11 (count 'em) sample games, to show what can be achieved.

Designed by David Malmberg, *The Adventure Game Toolkit* was created using Pascal programming language, which may explain its structured approach. The only thing missing from *AGT* is a graphic utility, or hooks to port over files from popular graphics programs such as *DeluxePaint* and *Paintbrush*. However, new additions and versions are always in the pipeline.

Apparently Softworks produced *AGT* for Electronic Arts to market as a top-flight adventure utility. However, the deal fell through so Softworks decided to go public. Thank your wallet that they did!

ST 91%

```
COMMAND UP
AtLocation 9 ;below grate
IsClosed 283 ;grate
PrintMessage 130 ;This exit is closed
DoneWithTurn
END

;Programmer's Den related

COMMAND SOUTH
AtLocation 31 ;programmer's den
FlagOFF 15 ;programmer is not angry
FlagOFF 16 ;programmer has not given his secret
TurnFlagON 16 ;give secret word
PrintMessage 212
DoneWithTurn
```

This screen shows the guts of *AGT*, the way you have to write the actual 'programming'. Note how it refers to the messages, location descriptions and variables, or 'flags' stored in the other files.

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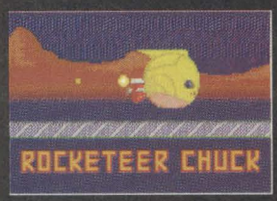
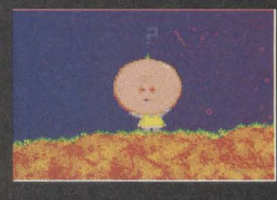




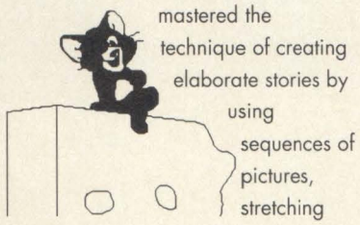
Steve Packer's versatile Chuck character has done everything from being blown up like a Lemming, getting transformed like Arnie did in *Total Recall*, as well as taking part in a number of other adventures...

Animadness

Move over Bugs, Mickey and Daffy – there's a new breed of computer-created cartoon characters bursting out of the public domain. Tim Howell tracks down the digital Disneys...

If a picture's worth a thousand words then a series of pictures must be the equivalent of a pretty hefty novel. But if that series is strung together in a rapid sequence to create a cartoon then it creates an unique art form that cannot be reproduced in any amount of words.

That's been the case in cartoon animation for the last half century. Pioneers such as Walt Disney mastered the technique of creating elaborate stories by using sequences of pictures, stretching the public's imagination and portraying events that would be impossible to depict in any other way.



Without cartoons, how else would characters like Wile E Coyote be able to survive being blown up by dynamite three times in the space of five minutes? How would Tweety Pie be able to explore the intestines of Sylvester the cat without being ensconced by gastric acids?

Computers take over

Over the last few years the techniques used to create cartoon animations have incorporated computer technology. Computers are used to speed up the transition of stories from paper to screen. Instead of human animators having to draw all the frames in a sequence, they can now concentrate on drawing the first and last frames, while the computer does the more tedious task of drawing the numerous frames in-between.

Apart from helping to generate cartoon-style graphics, computers have been used for more serious animations in movies, such as the stunning fluid-like T-1000 in the movie *Terminator 2*. Cute it wasn't, graphically amazing it was. The latest Michael Jackson video, *Black or White*, uses a similar technique.

On a smaller scale, animations are starting to breakthrough on the home computer scene. As computers have become more advanced, equipped with larger memories and capable of producing better graphics, people have tried to stretch the machines to their limits. This is particularly the case with the Amiga which has even been used in professional animation studios to cut down the costs of the real film-based

Eric Schwartz: the world's greatest PD animator?

Famous for his *Anti-Lemming* and *Aerotoon* animations, Eric Schwartz is one of the most highly-regarded animators on the Amiga. His numerous and varied productions are eagerly-awaited, always original and great fun. *Public Domain* ran up its trans-Atlantic phone bill to speak to Eric at his home in Ohio, to discover what it takes to be a PD animator...

How old are you and what do you do?
I'm 20. Right now I am at college; the Columbus College of Art and Science. I'm taking classes in art and illustration. I do the cartoons entirely separately from college; they're mostly just a hobby.

Where do get your ideas for them from?
All over the place. I've taken suggestions from my friends, various things. I see something like the *Lemmings* game and I want to do a parody of that.

You've done quite a few *Aerotoon* animations. Why?
My father is an engineer in the Air Force, and through that I've had a lot of exposure to aircraft and so on. I've been interested in that for a long time so I've done cartoons on it.

How long does each cartoon take you to produce?
It varies depending on the complexity, but usually somewhere between a week and five weeks. I've produced over 30 so far.

What specification Amiga do you use?
I've got an Amiga 2000 with 3Mb of memory and a hard drive. It's hard to make much of an animation that fits in a very small machine, especially something like 512K.

What software do you use to produce your animations?
For most graphics I use *Deluxe Paint III* and now *IV*. To put together the graphics with sound I use *Movie Setter* from Gold Disk.

Is there anything available in the public domain that would be useful for producing animation?
There are a lot of utilities out there that build

In his *Anti-Lemming* animation, Schwartz does more than parody the little creatures...

From text book to computer

Animation is by no means a new concept: it has been around in some form or another for over a century. Fundamentally, the techniques used in the early days aren't much different to how it is achieved today.

One of the earliest forms of animation was paper-based. Remember at school when you drew a series of tiny drawings on the corners of pages in your textbook? Each drawing was slightly different and when you flicked through the pages of the book, the pictures looked as if they were moving.

The same principle is used for cartoon animations on TV and in the movies. Each frame of the cartoon is drawn individually, by professional artists. The more frames used in the animation, the more smoothly the characters appear to move .

As the cost of producing cartoons has escalated dramatically, many cartoon producers have opted for fewer frames per second and the standard of animation has deteriorated – many kids' cartoons today – such as *Thundercats* and *Captain Planet* – are jerky and clumsy in their movements.

As computers get more involved in animation, this should hopefully free up the animation studios so they can concentrate on better stories and artwork. The machines can do all the boring work of generating the extra in-between frames to make the images run smoothly, resulting in better-quality animation overall. Perhaps this is a case where man and machine can really work together to produce the best results. A renaissance of quality cartoon animation is nigh.

animation process, with its low-cost, high-quality graphics.

Public gallery

One of the main arenas for computer artists to display their creations is in the public domain particularly in the case of Amiga animators. There are far fewer animations available for the ST, and hardly any for the PC. Because the Amiga is well-equipped hardware-wise, with its blitter and custom graphics chips, it lends itself to graphically-intensive applications.

Animations fit nicely into the category 'slot' between demos and slideshows. Demos specialise in stretching the computer in a lot of areas, not only in terms of graphics but also sound as well. While many demos are impressive, often they try to stretch the machine in so many areas

"Computer animation is an art form of the 90s, and the public domain is at the forefront of exhibiting these works."

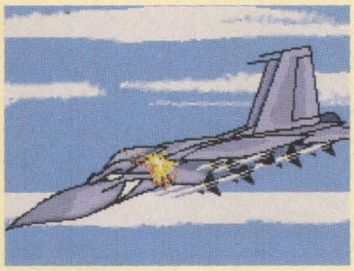
that its power isn't used to the maximum in one area, but rather sparingly in several. Slideshows, on the other hand, are exactly what their name implies: a sequence of individual pictures that are displayed one at a time on-screen. They can be impressive to look at, but they don't utilise the true power of the machine.

Computer animations are an art form of the 90s, and the public domain is at the forefront of exhibiting these works. Artists such as Tobias Richter, famous for his science fiction based animations, and Eric Schwartz, the man behind the *Aerotoons* series as well as the infamous *Anti-Lemming Demo*, have become legends in the Amiga community because of the quality and surprising frequency of their output. Other artists, such as the UK's own Steve Packer (of *Chuck* fame), are beginning to carve their animations from pictures, but it's hard to find anything that's as easy to use as the commercial packages.

Why do you put your animations into the public domain?
The main reason is that I just like to show them to people and that's probably the easiest way of doing it. I'm not too interested in making a lot of money out of it.

Would it be possible to actually earn money from them or or is there just not the demand for that sort of thing?
Well, I have done some animations on commission for some software companies, but most people would not pay $30 or $40 just for an animation that they may only load or play once or twice.

You've put one of your latest animations (*The Dating Game*) out as shareware. Are people responding to that and sending you the shareware fee?



With an evil expression on its face and all guns blazing, this F15 means business

Yes, they have been. It's kind of surprised me a little bit actually, but I did that because the thing took me a very long time and a lot of effort to make. It's a large one and takes about 3Mb to play!

What are your own favourite cartoon characters?
I've always respected cartoon characters in cartoons from the 40s and 50s, like from Warner Brothers and Disney and various others. I try to emulate some of that in my cartoons.

Would you like to produce cartoons professionally, such as working for Disney or some other animation house?
That's something I'd like to do. I don't know if I'd actually want to do that as a full-time job, but I have a lot of fun making them.

What animations will you be producing in the future?
Probably coming very soon will probably be two with Amy. Most of the ones I'm working on are sequels to existing animations. One will be a sequel to *At the Movies* and the other one will be a sequel to the *Amy vs Walker* demo.

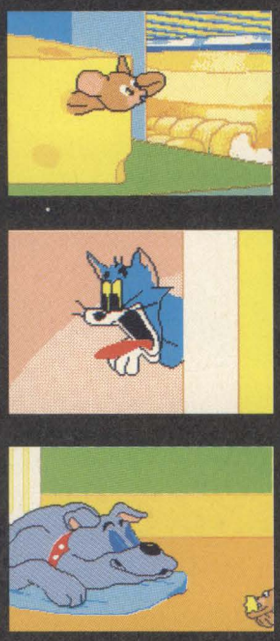
Will they take masses of memory again do you think?
It's likely *(laughing)*.

Have you any tips for budding cartoon animators who would like to produce their own animations?
My only real tip is just to keep drawing all the time. That's how I did it.

Eric Schwartz's *Aerotoon* animations are well known on the Amiga. They not only look good, they also have a great sense of humour, Schwartz giving his computerised creations a personality of their own

cont. on p56

cont. from p55



While the Amiga dominates the PD animation scene, the ST can hold its own – look at *Cartoon Time*

own niche in the animation scene.

A lot of time and effort goes into creating these works, with the sole immediate reward being the recognition and admiration of fellow Amiga users. Sometimes these artists do get noticed and are invited to use their talents to more profitable ends. Tobias Richter, for example, was the creator of the brilliant introduction animation to *Alien Breed*, the new arcade game from developers Team 17.

But this doesn't mean that these animators are just after fame and fortune. Steve Packer produces animations purely for his own enjoyment: "I wish I could make money from it but no-one's interested."

Do it yourself

So how do you go about creating your own animations? Apart from a certain degree of talent and a level of artistic sensibility, together with quite a bit of patience, you need to have the right hardware and software as well.

In terms of hardware, regardless of what machine you have, the main prerequisite of any animation work is a lot of memory. Just to be able to *view* some of the more complex animations created by the likes of Richter and Schwartz requires at least 1.5Mb of RAM, and to be able to create animations such as these you need two to three times that amount of memory. To store these animations you really need a hard drive, as there is too much data to fit on a humble floppy disk.

"Just to be able to view some of the more complex animations requires at least 1.5Mb of RAM"

Don't let this put you off, though. This level of hardware is the absolute limit needed to create some of the most complex animations; the people who use it are serious about animation. As the saying goes: don't run before you can walk.

Quite respectable animations can be created on standard machines, although the more memory available the better. Steve Packer uses an Amiga with a paltry 1Mb of RAM, and while he admits this is really not enough memory, it shows that complex animations can be done with relatively limited hardware. He also uses an external floppy drive: "It's essential!"

As far as software is concerned, the Amiga has the most animation programs available for it. One way for

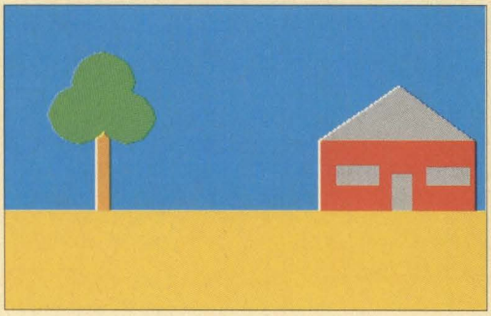
Getting animated ● Getting animated ● Getting animated ● Getting animated

Step-by-step guide to Ani ST

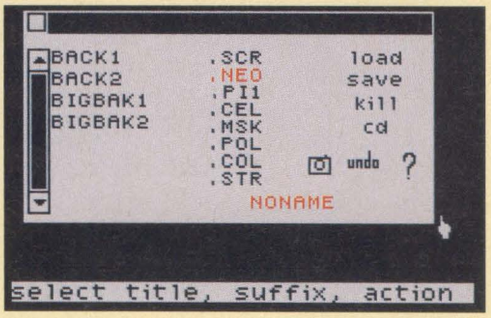
What better way to see how easy it is to create computer cartoons than to try and create them yourself? ST owners have the perfect opportunity to do that right now – we've included the superb *Ani ST* on this month's *Public Domain* cover disk, and now we're going to show you how to take those fist faltering steps to becoming the next Eric Schwartz.

For details of how to get *Ani ST* up and running check out page eight. Always remember to work with a back-up copy of your cover disk when you use the programs on it in case you accidentally damage them.

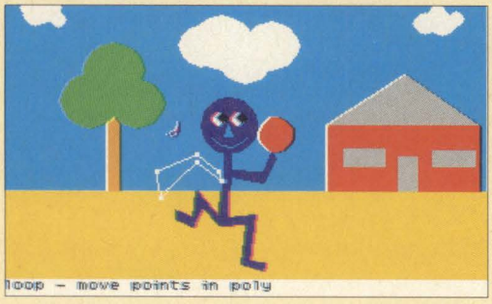
To give you an introduction of how to use *Ani ST*, here's a step-by-step tutorial of how to give your graphics a life of their own. (Please excuse the simplistic nature of these graphics. To prove how easy it is to use the Ed decided to give it to someone with no artistic talent – me!)



1 The first thing you need is a good background. You can create some in *Ani ST* but it's better to draw one in another PD drawing package such as *Jet Paint* or *Neochrome* (the earlier, genuinely PD versions), or any art package that can output graphics in NEO or Degas format. This way you will be able to come up with something really stunning, just like me.



2 Boot up *Ani ST* to get its Fast Menu on-screen, then put the disk you saved your background on in the drive. Click on the disk icon in the Fast Menu. A window listing file types will appear. Click on the file-type you want to import and the files of that type will be displayed on the left of the file selector box. Click on the one you want (your background) and it'll appear on screen.



6 The next step is to animate Fred's arms and legs, which you created from polygons. Go to the Move menu and select the Loop command. Click on a point on the polygon you want to move, then drag it to a new position. You can move each point on a polygon separately. Now you can move to the next part of the animation. Go to the Play menu and click on Next Tween.

7 For his next trick, Fred wants to kick the ball. To do this he has to get it down to his foot first. Using the Along Path command in the same way as in step five draw the ball's downward path from Fred's hand to his foot. Then, using the Loop command – again in the same way as you did in step five – make Fred's foot come up to meet the ball.

Amiga owners to get involved in animation easily and cheaply is by using Electronic Arts' *Deluxe Paint III*. Apart from being an essential purchase for Amiga owners interested in using the graphics capabilities of their machine, offers simple yet capable animation functions.

There are more advanced packages, but these often need more powerful hardware than the average home users has.

Handy utilities

Programs to create animations are rare in the public domain, mainly because of how complex these programs need to be and the time involved in developing them. There are a number of public domain programs that are useful for animators, however, including graphic converters (programs that can change pictures from one graphic standard to another), utilities that are capable of playing animations created by commercial animation programs, as well as other tools that can convert animation file-types so they can be used in other packages.

The ST and PC have far fewer animation packages available than the Amiga, mainly because neither machine's hardware lends itself to being used for anything too graphically advanced. On the ST one of the more functional programs, (and one that was originally a commercial program), is *Ani ST* which we've not only included on this month's cover disk but is also given the walk-through treatment below.

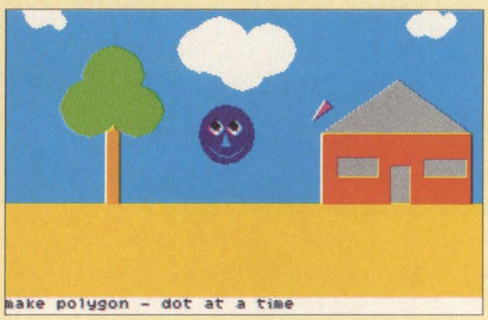
Most of the programs available for the PC are high-end commercial packages, only really suitable for those with powerful hardware and who are able to afford the software; this takes animation out of the reach of most PC users. The limitations of the PC hardware and the subsequent high costs involved in even starting to produce animations must help to explain the paucity of them on this machine.

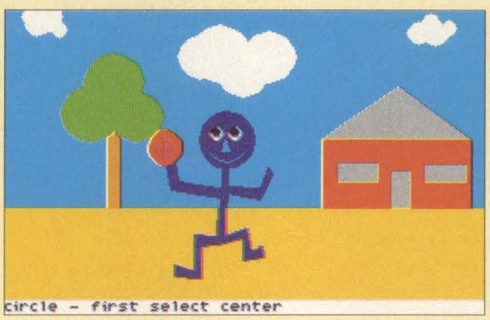
With a bit of time and effort you too could soon be creating your own animated masterpieces. If you don't want to create your own there are heaps of animations available in the public domain to look at – many of them pretty damned impressive.

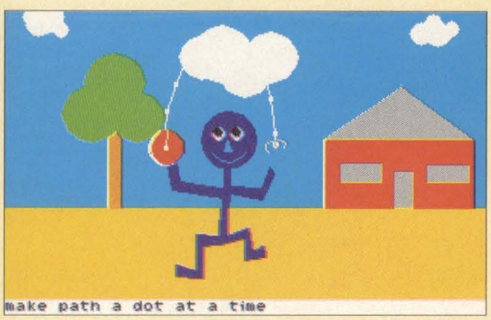
That's all folks! PD

In *Cartoon Time*, the personalities of the famous Tom and Jerry are captured on the computer screen

Getting animated ● Getting animated ● Getting animated ● Getting animated



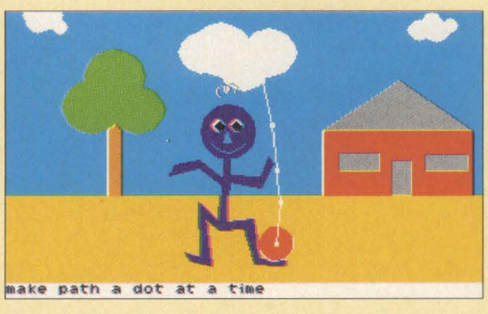


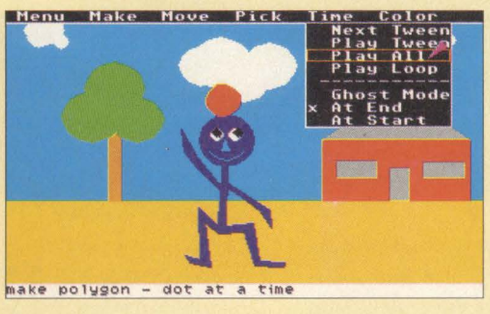


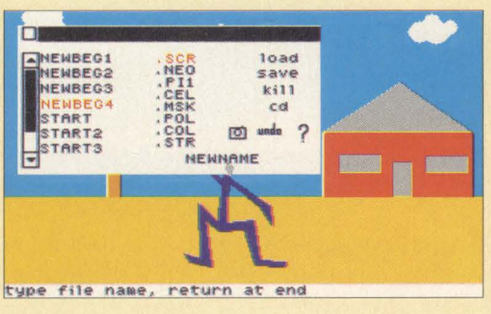
3 Now it's time to create your cartoon character! Let's call him Fred. Select what colour you want Fred to be from the Colour menu at the top of the screen. Then, using the Circle command in the Make menu draw a head, and add smaller eyes and pupils as well. For the nose and mouth use the polygon command, manually drawing each point in the objects.

4 You'd better give Fred some arms and legs next. Make each limb a separate polygon so that you can animate them individually a bit later. Fred has to be doing something so give him a red ball to play about with. This is simply another circle. Draw it in the position where you want it to be at the start of your animation.

5 Now you can start animating. Go to the Play menu and click on Next Tween. To animate the ball to make it look like Fred's throwing it from one hand to the the other go to the the Along Path command in the Move menu. Click on the ball and then draw the path you want it to follow with a series of clicks. You can make his eyes move in exactly the same way.







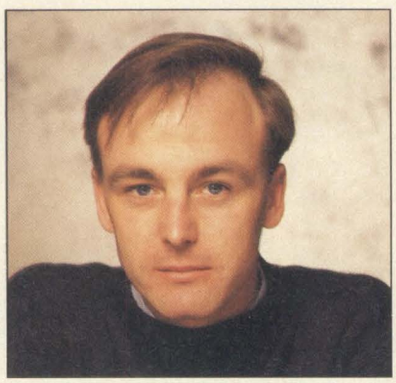
8 With the ball now at his feet, Fred looks expectantly at you waiting for your next move. How about making the ball shoot up and land on the top of Fred's head? What a good idea! Yep, it's time to use that useful Along Path command again. And don't forget to carry on shifting his eyes so that in the final animation it looks as if they are following the ball!

9 At the end of your epic animation, Fred's ball nestles on the smooth surface of his blue bonce. There are two ways to see the results of your work. You can either go to the Menu menu and select Fast Menu where you can then click on the larger of the projector icons, or you can go to the Time Menu and select Play All. Prepare to be impressed.

10 To save your work first make sure that the disk you want to save it to is in the drive. Then go to the Menu menu and select Storage. A window will appear. Where it says No Name type in what you want to call your animation and then click on save. Now you can watch Fred performing his Pele-like skills whenever you like, as many times as you want. Lucky you!

Business & Applications

Whether it's a word processor, a database or the next step towards the paperless office, put away your wallet and pull up a chair as Jerry Glenwright gets down to business with yet another gargantuan grab-bag of free software...



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PhoneDir (PD)

Amiga • BBS Download (not for distribution by library)

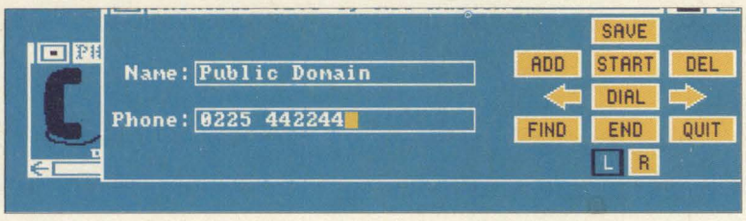
Middle-management? Bunch of lazy gits if ever you saw 'em! Electronic this, portable that – sometimes it seems like all bodily functions are covered by far-eastern gizmos designed to ease the troubled lives of cash-sodden company executives.

Guess what? One more such device has just appeared. So, all Amiga-lovers, now you don't even have to push the buttons on your personal communications device (er, that's telephone for the uninitiated), because *PhoneDir* does the dialling for you, automatically.

The program is equipped with a series of buttons which enable you to enter, save and step through the telephone numbers of your nearest and dearest or even the bank manager.

But how does it work? Simple. *PhoneDir* generates standard dialling tones (you know, those 'beep, boop, bop, beep' things) which, when played into the telephone handset via a monitor's speaker, instruct the telephone exchange to dial the number. Yeah, well, semi-automatic dialling anyway, you do actually have to pick up the telephone and hold it to the speaker, but that shouldn't be too much of a bother even for the busiest of executives.

Now the only thing your fingers have to walk over is the Slow Comfortable Screw your company expenses provided for you and your secretary at the middle management business convention...



Now you can pick your nose and phone your bank manager at the same time! *PhoneDir* for the terminally lazy does the dialling for you without dimpling your digits

AMIGA **60%**

MicroEMACS (PD)

ST • ST180 • Page 6

PO Box 54, Stafford ST16 1DR.

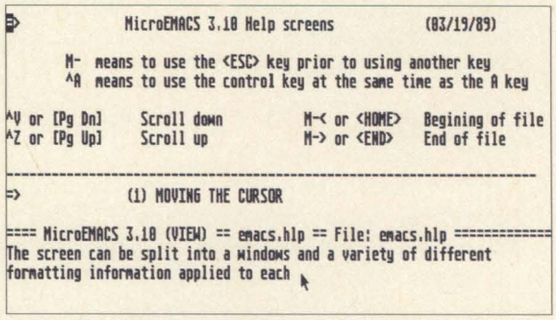
MicroEMACS is a text processor that's been around for an awfully long time. In the days when your Granny got her kicks from roomfuls of silicon down at the local poly, *MicroEMACS* was the last word in text editing.

Nowadays, the program is largely ignored by all but a few die-hards in University computer departments, and that's a pity, because *'EMACS* is as powerful a word processor as you'll wrap a disk drive around. True, it doesn't have the sophisticated front-ends of the commercial offerings, but it does offer a range of features and functions that you just won't find anywhere else at any price! And remember, prettying up a program with a slick screen is as simple as hacking together a resource file. It's writing powerful, intelligent code which requires real effort.

The program opens with a daunting blank screen bearing a copyright message at the bottom and the ubiquitous blinking cursor at the top. To begin word processing, just type. The first thing you'll notice is that the program does not wrap lines automatically – the screen shuffles horizontally and to evoke that feature, you have to issue the relevant command (^XM, ie Control-X-M).

That's probably turned a lot of potential users off right away, but think about this. Once learned, the supreme flexibility of *EMACS* ensures that it will grow with your needs. The first time you boot it, you're presented with a bare-bones screen editor. But as your knowledge of the program increases, you can alter its behaviour to suit your own needs.

Everything, including access to the


MicroEMACS 3.10 Help screens (03/19/89)
M- means to use the <ESC> key prior to using another key
^A means to use the control key at the same time as the A key
^Y or [Pg Dn] Scroll down M-< or <HOME> Begining of file
^Z or [Pg Up] Scroll up M-> or <END> End of file
(1) MOVING THE CURSOR
==== MicroEMACS 3.10 (VIEW) == emacs.hlp == File: emacs.hlp ==========
The screen can be split into a windows and a variety of different
formatting information applied to each

Although the *EMACS* screen is a little daunting at first, pressing the help key summons on-line help files in split windows

operating system, is on offer. You can remap the keys, define macros to solve lengthy command-string problems, split the screen into windows and assign different 'versions' of the program to each and much more. And, of course, all of the standard search and replace, word counting and other functions are available too.

For the slightly more advanced computer user or those who don't mind a bit of a challenge, *MicroEMACS* is probably the best text editor available. you have to work at it, but the results make the effort worthwhile.

ST **80%**

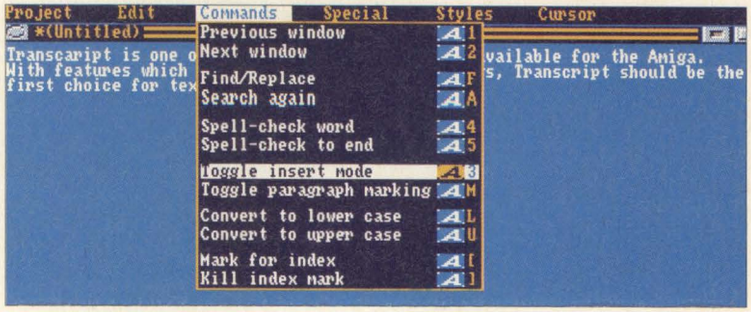
Transcript 1.0 (Licenceware)

Amiga • W001 • Software Expressions
☎ 0272 637634

Finally, a really corking word processor for the Amiga! *Transcript* rushes in where the *AMOS*-writers of the CBM world fear to tread...

Boot *Transcript*, and the first thing you'll notice is that there are no tab markers. OK, so somewhere out there, someone's gonna want to know where each and every tab is going to land. Me? Not a bit of it! If I want to know I'll press the Tab key, OK? What I want from a word processor is a nice clear screen, with every available line given over to the symphony in prose emanating line by deliciously pithy line from my finger tips – not appallingly-drawn clunky Tab key markers the programmer thought that I might want to see.

Even better than the Perrier-clear screen are the prettiest pop-up menus



As clear as the morning dew and twice as intuitive – that's the *Transcript* text editor

cont. on p60

Delve into your databases at a touch of a key – front ends for business users

The trouble with many supposedly simple replacement front-ends is that they're often esoteric bits of code aimed firmly at those in the know – the guys with their heads buried firmly in bits and bytes. Most business users just don't want to get involved (and who can blame them?)

But there are replacement front-ends intended for use by the rest of us – those actively aimed at the business community. No hexadecimal, no complicated command strings, just the simple pleasure of launching into an application at the press of a key...

VDOS (PD)

ST • V69 • MT Software
Greensward House, The Broadway, Totland, Isle of Wight PO39 0BX

The ST's desktop looks good, sounds good, probably tastes good, but when it comes to actually using the thing, you'd be better off trying to shuffle files in an enormouse vat of warm treacle.

VDOS or *Virtual to Disk Operating System* is a neat little interface between you and the everyday horrors of computing which provides an alternative to GEM's Desktop and menu bar. To look at it's just a blank screen with six pop-up menus at the bottom, but don't let that fool you.

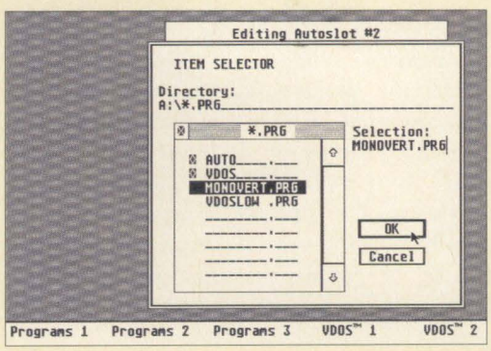
Three of these pop-up menus provide simple tools to move, delete and rename files, create folders and so on. The remaining three have user-definable 'slots' into which you insert your most-used software. By telling *VDOS* where to find your DTP package or sound sampler software, for example, you can access the programs by popping up the menu and clicking on them – none of that messy searching through folders or any of that nonsense!

In effect, *VDOS* is simply further insulation from the computer. With a hard drive, you don't need to remember where software is; *VDOS* handles all the paths and all you have to do is point and click.

VDOS is smooth and easy to use. There's a strange little bug which makes the screen and mouse pointer flash maniacally when you're defining a path to software, but on the whole, it's idiot resilient.

The bottom line? Well, if you're really so desperately techno-phobic get VDOS – it works, and it works well.

ST **80%**



Defining a menu application slot is as simple as telling VDOS where to find the application. To run it, select it from the menu

PullDown (Shareware)

PC • Nildram Software
26 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks HP7 9BD.
☎ 0494 729236

OK look, I know it's pretty difficult to come up with yet another snappy little two-word title for you software – you know, one of those *HotBuns, DimDOS, WetWang* things with the American-style capital letter in the middle – but *PullDown*? Heaven help us!

Fortunately for its distributor, Nildram Software (and don't you just know that 'Nildram' is the distributor's surname spelled backwards...), *PullDown* rewards those who invest a little effort in installing it, with a simple-to-use front-end that is everything a 'replacement' for DOS should be. Unfortunately, it's limited to those who own hard drives (and they tend not to be rank beginners...), but that shouldn't exclude too many users in these days of 486SXs given free with the Kelloggs Cornflakes.

Computer journalists the world over have – ahem – remarked upon the dinosaur-like command-line interface of DOS for the last 10 years or so, and although it's possible to replace it with a GUI (Graphical User Interface), namely Windows, you can't escape the underlying gut-wrenching feeling that the PC was never designed to support point-and-click – use Windows and after a day or two you'll be issuing a DEL *.* commands and taking up the DOS manual again in earnest!

And that's where *PullDown* steps in. This clever front-end is run entirely from batch files and provides a simple menu overlay which enables you to select and launch applications without getting your hands dirty. Quit the current application and the batch file steps in again and returns you to the menu. It's a neat solution to a big problem and in practice, works very well.

PullDown v3.20 Installer • MicroDynamics Development
(•) Install Full-Featured Standalone/LAN Server Version
( ) Install Secured Workstation/LAN Node Version
(•) Install Sample Menu File Only (Default Samples Only, Fast)
( ) Scan Entire System for Known Programs and Make Definitions
[X] Install Bonus Shareware Disk Backup System FLEXIBAK
[ ] Install Bonus Shareware Batch File Compiler PowerBATCH
[X] Copy Batch Files to Root Directory of Install Drive
[ ] Upgrade From v3.0x to v3.20
Drive you are Installing FROM A:
Drive\Directory to Install TO C:\MENU

You need never get you hands dirty with DOS again! *PullDown* complies with the CUI standard to provide a simple front-end. (And the installer's pretty good too!)

You don't even have to mess around creating batch files because an accompanying set-up program does all the work for you. Run install, sit back for ten minutes, reboot, and there you have it – a menu bar to be proud of! And when you're a little more familiar with the program, you can define custom dialogues and help screens.

PullDown supports password protection, it's network compatible and conforms to the internationally-agreed standard for common user access menuing. Simple to install and a pleasure to use.

PC **85%**

cont. from p59

this side of an Apple Mac, the pointiest mouse protuberance this side of a 50s bra and the funkiest collection of features you're ever going to find on the application-underrated Amiga.

In-line word counting, spell-checking, keystroke-saving macros, search and replace, cut, copy and paste are a few of the 'standards', but what about indexing, document-wide case conversion, highlight 'all', configuration saving and a print set-up window that you won't see outside six hundred quid's worth of Quark *XPress*? Now that's what I call features!

The program handles multiple open files between which you can switch at a click and there are excellent navigation facilities so that traversing large documents is easy. Hot keys are supported for nearly every command, and by summoning the Set Options window from the Special menu, a whole list of system parameters can be altered to suit your taste including cursor flashing and width, keypad toggling between cursor control and numeric keys, text and background colour, tabs and more.

All this, and *Transcript* responds lightning fast to your every whim, never drops a keypress, is intuitive and... I want one!

Sounds like I've got shares, right? Well, I haven't, but I'm sure as hell going to get some should they become available.

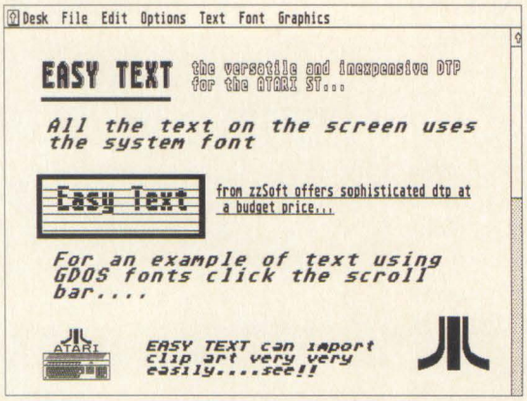
AMIGA **85%**

Easy Text (PD/Shareware)

ST • Goodman Enterprises
16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 1SW
☎ 0782 335650

In the small amount of time since desktop publishing became a viable option for affordable microcomputers, many DTP contenders for your wad have appeared. Some, like *Calamus*, set the standard for ST publishing but require the auctioning of a couple of offspring to fund the purchase price. Unfortunately, those unwilling to pay through the nose end up with the kind of publishing kit that any kid with John Bull's printing set and a school jotter could outdo! At least, that is, until the release of *Easy Text*.

Easy Text is a budget desktop publisher that is an attempt to provide true page layout on the ST for minimal cost. The program is available in 0.5Mb and 1Mb flavours so that owners with big RAM quotients get to make the most of their machine's abilities. There are extensive document files too, enabling even the raw beginner to start publishing from the first double-click. Fine. All STs are covered and there's a good on-disk manual – but what is free DTPing really like?


Desk File Edit Options Text Font Graphics
EASY TEXT
the versatile and inexpensive DTP for the ATARI ST...
All the text on the screen uses the system font
Easy Text
from zzSoft offers sophisticated dtp at a budget price...
For an example of text using GDOS fonts click the scroll bar....
EASY TEXT can import clip art very very easily....see!!

Previously considered impossible, *Easy Text* provides desktop publishing at the unheard of price of twenty quid!

Surprisingly good in the case of *Easy Text*. The program opens to a de rigeur menu bar, window and scroll bars which act as the centre of paste-down operations. To work with text or position a picture (yep, *Easy Text* handles graphics too), you create an oblong box, known as a frame, by clicking and dragging with the mouse, then either type directly into the new frame or import text or a picture into it.

Frames are treated by the program as completely autonomous entities. That is, you can manipulate any frame irrespective of any other frame. This enables you to position headlines, columns of text and pictures anywhere in a document subject only to your own aesthetic desires. This use of frames makes *Easy Text* exceptionally flexible. Text can be formatted using a variety of supplied fonts, sizes and styles (although you'll need GDOS) and there are plenty of pre-defined fills to pretty up your publications.

There are one or two annoying little anomalies. You can't edit text directly in the frame after the first time, the menu bar's a bit jittery and it's not quite as intuitive as programmer Roger Pearson might like to think, but at this price, who's complaining? *Easy Text* is a viable solution to publishing needs at a price which even those with erstwhile BCCI accounts will be able to afford.

You can use the program as PD, but you have to send off a £20 registration fee if you want to be able to print out your masterpieces.

ST **85%**

Optimise your schedules with a shareware filofax

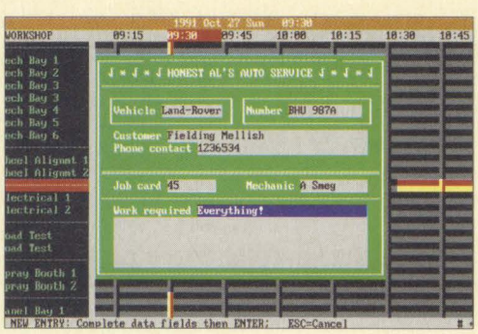
TimeTrak (Shareware)

PC • The Thompson Partnership, Church Croft, Bramshall, Ottoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 5DE ☎ 0889 564601

Go right over to the wall, tear down the wall-planner and shred it! Now pick up your Fact-o-File, bend the outer covers back so that the little rings snap open, hang it out of a convenient upper-storey window and shake vigorously.

Why? Because a sliver of stunning scheduling software called *TimeTrak* has just made traditional schedulers obsolete.

It does this by allowing you to specify exactly what resources are at your disposal, how much time can be given to them and how you want to manage them. Previously, scheduling software acted simply as an on-screen diary which, frankly, was often more trouble than it was worth.



Beats the hell out of a knotted hanky. *TimeTrak* provides comprehensive tools to track your schedules

The program defines resources as whatever you shove around during the day. Supermarket managers, for instance, might define their resources as stock – beans, soup, corn cobs and the like – whereas street-wise Manhattan pimps might define their resources as people – the 'mamas' who comb the streets saying things like, "Hey baby, what's goin' down whitcha'all..."

By specifying the resources then combining them with the hours you can expect to work, it's possible to build up a comprehensive schedule of just what's going on and when. By way of contrast, most schedulers allow for only one type of resource: time.

Installation is a simple process involving de-archiving the files into a sub-directory on your hard disk (*TimeTrak* will run from floppies but at a cost...) using the installation program and the PKUNZIP utility provided.

Registration is a shade expensive at almost £70 (which is still quite good, it's just that I'm spoiled by so much good, cheap shareware), but for those whose maxim is 'time is money', *TimeTrak* is exceptionally useful.

PC **80%**

Grammar 1.5 (PD)

Amiga • BBS Download (not for distribution by library)

You've just spent the last hour or two writing a begging letter to the bank. Thing is, who're you going to impress with that lousy grammar? Double-negatives, prepositions hanging from the ends of sentences, tautology, split infinitives – it's all there.

No-one, and especially not a mean-assed bank manager, is going to be impressed enough to acquiesce to your pleas for clemency, overdrafts and so on when presented with that bit of scribble.

Enter the Amiga running a jinky little fragment known as *Grammar 1.5*. The program does nothing more than analyse and report on the validity or

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WORD PROCESSING

Bradford - prints Wordstar and ASCII files in over 30 high quality fonts.
By Design - desktop publishing and graphic design capabilities for WordPerfect, including design tools, clip art etc (req. WordPerfect - Streetwise).
Childrens Wordprocessor - menu driven, large on-screen fonts, includes sample stories.
Fastype typing tutor with good graphics test speed and accuracy.
Flex - professional editor with optional .BAK files, autosave, macros, up to 10 windows (Williams).
Fontastic - fancy fonts with font designer.
Galaxy Lite V1 - Latest version of formerly Galaxy V2.43, ideal for small WP tasks, and easy to use.
LQ V2 - memory resident print enhancement, works alongside your word-processor.
Mindreader - guesses your next word, suitable for scientists, doctors etc.
Multilingual WP (11 disks) - Intext WP with support for Arabic, European, Farsi Persian, Gaelic Irish, Greek, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, Turkish, Urdu & Yugoslavian.
MultiWord - electronic thesaurus, which can operate as a standalone program, or as TSR.
B-Edit. fully functioned text editor with large characters, suitable for vision-impaired users, includes 50 Wordstar commands and 60,000 word dictionary
PC Outline - memory resident thoughts organiser. Up to 9 outlines on-screen with re-sizable windows.
PC Type 4 (4 disks) - latest version of Buttonware favourite can now work on up to 10 files, with boxes, lines and calculations. Hard disk req.
PC Write - can display mathematical foreign characters, split-screen editing. Uses ASCII files, max 64K.

DATABASE MANAGEMENT

Card Index - simple filing system. Can print out 3 x 5 cards.
Catalist (2 disks) - powerful mailing list manager. Over 32,000 names and addresses per list, duplication detection, post code formatting for over 100 countries, merge split, output on labels up to 8 wide. Rolodex cards. Hard disk req.
DBase III+? (2 disks) - well, not quite, but Wampum reads Dbase files, does reports, supports networking and more. Requires hard disk.
HyperShell - (3 disks) - multi-file Hypertext reference system, help system and menuing system. Has intelligent text file viewer, directory browser file manager and applications user interface prototyping with pop-up menus etc.
PC File V (3 disks) - Latest version of Buttonware's popular database system. Many powerful features but friendly and easy to use, replaces PC File + and PC File:dB. Hard disk required.
Speciality Database Software - store up to 1,000,000 records with sort search and report, 1 disk each subject (available separately): Record Collectors, Book Minders, Photographers, Antiques, Coins, Comics, Films / Videos, Home Inventory/ Insurance, Memorabilia, Stamps (Homecraft)
SR-Info (2 disks) - dBase compatible database system with programming language, WYSISYG screen designs, 6 datafiles open simultaneously, 65,000 records per file, versatile report writer (hard disk req. - Sub Rosa)

SPREADSHEETS

As Easy As - amazing Lotus 123 compatible spreadsheet, reads 123 files, macros etc.
Lotus 123 Worksheets & Macros - includes cash flow, line-of-credit tracker, ratio analyser, stats calculator, growth capacity calc, queue analysis, new venture budget, quote generator.
Lotus 123 Worksheets (3 disks) - includes financial analysis, import utils, linear stats, biorhythms, travel business expenses, flowchart symbols, stock portfolio analysis, rental property analysis.
Lotus 123 Tutorial - covers menus, printing and databases (release 2 ONLY).
PC Calc + V2 (3 disks) - new features, more powerful, still integrates with PC File + & PC Type +, extensive manual. Hard disk required.
Pivot - high quality Epson printed output "addin" for As Easy As, with portrait or landscape, 6 NLQ Fonts, complete page layout control etc (Trius).
Side Writer - print out ASCII files on their side, ideal for wide spreadsheets.

GAMES/TRIVIA

Airstrike - fighter aircraft shoot-em-up with vector graphics, mach speed, night and daytime missions (CGA and joystick req.) (Rufus).
Arcade Games (4 disks) - includes Bugs!, JumpJoe, Datnoids, Nuclear Attack Simulation, 3-Demon, Kong, Bricks, Pyramid, Pitfall, PC-Golf.
Backgammon
Bermuda Triangle - sailing quest (EGA ONLY).
Blackjack! - accurate simulation.
Casino Games - includes Bridge, Othello, Roulette.
Castle - Popular adventure.
Cave Quest - fantasy role-playing game.

EGA Wheel/VGA Wheel - like popular wheel of fortune game, please state VGA or EGA

Football Forecast - Pools prediction system has support for 214 teams in English & Scottish leagues showing form, predictions and permutations.
Ford Simulator II (2 disks) - 16 models, 4 events including Grand Prix, also buyers guide and ordering information.
Grand Prix - from authors of Popstar/ Soccer Game etc.
Hack - adventure. DND style
Games 15 - Star Wars, Sea Wolf, Frogger etc
Games 16 - Soviets, Bricks, FLIGHTMARE.
Games 17 - Pac Man, Poker, Castle, Invaders etc.
Get Lucky! - adult games.
Mahjong - like oriental rummy with PUNGS. KONGS & CHOWS!
Monopoly/Tune Trivia - US version of famous board game. Tune Trivia like 'Name That Tune'.
PC Chess - play the computer or a friend, save load etc.
Pharoah's Tomb - archaelogical arcade action.
Pinball Rally - three versions of popular game.
Scrabble - computer version of popular board game.
Sea Battle - naval game spanning World War I & World War II. No save or load in this version (Rooney).
Starlord - high adventure in a distant galaxy
The Popstar - cope with pressures of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll as you tour the world
Sleuth - murder adventure
Spacewar - shoot 'em up with good graphics.
Soccer - yes! manage one of several teams and steer them towards glory.
Super Power - Six-a-game of superpower economics, trade and military conflict.
Trivia (3 disks) - The Trivia Machine has several categories and levels.
Willy The Worm - ladders, rolling barrels etc.

BUSINESS/VERTICAL

Easy Project - up to 2000 tasks, Gantt charts, automatic schedule generation, instant reports, dBase file compatibility (Parcell).
Forms Creation - design, save forms, save forms with data, printout. EZ Forms Exec.
Estate Agents System - storage and retrieval of information about properties, pending and closed sales, plus agents' details and helpful reports.
Estibid (5 disks) - contractors estimating/ costing analysis includes sub-contractors, materials, transport costs etc.
Hotel Inventory - accurate stock taking for pubs etc covering sales, volumes in sales, units and measures which can be recognised as an audit. Ajax.
Invoice and Statements - Simple to use, customer database, single or period invoices, auto-numbering, account summary with aged debt/VAT (Software Foundation Ltd). (Hard disk required).
Job Cost (2 disks) - simple to use, powerful, cost monitoring system, with transactions, reports and utils (hard disk req. - Micro Data Assist).
Leadmaster - Sales program which tracks customers, prospective customers, and has progress file, re-contacts, standard letters etc.
Make My Day - new version of this Time Management system, Appointment Calendar, Job Schedular, Time Log and Expense Account Manager.
PDS* Quote - Quotation system, now includes context - sensitive help, pop-up calendar, pop-up calculator, import data etc. (Pro Dev Software).
Quickbit - Estimating package for Electricians, Plumbers, Builders.
Salesman - sales management which includes Clients, Product analysis, Note Pad and Appointments Diary. (Hard disk req.)
Stock Processing (Inventory) - includes levels, listing, ordering, editing, cash register module.
Service Plus (2 disks) - Maintenance and Service, Call Tracking, suitable for electrical, plumbing, heating services etc.
The Controller (2 disks) - powerful project organiser. (Hard disk required).

Ultimate Sales Program (2 disks) - fully integrated Sales, Invoicing, retail price list system with period statements and invoices (Ebrell)

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Billing/Invoicing System (2 disks) - itemised invoices/bills with balance forward, finance charges, subtotals, balance due, also reports.
Cashbook (3 disks) - 5 bank accounts, 5 cash accounts payments/receipts posting, 100 nominal accts/VAT codes, VAT summaries (Freeway UK).
Cashtrac - Finance Manager which handles Cheque Accounts, Cheque Printing, Credit Cards and pop-up calculator.
Corporate Financial Analyst (2 disks) - company accounts analysis and planning, needs no modelling or spreadsheet experience, (Computer Financial Models UK).
Home Accounts - features checking, savings, credit cards and loan accounts with bill payments, calculator & calendar (FGS).
Home Finance Manager - Keep a record of Bank/Building Society accounts with monthly balances and details of standing orders also loan calculator with repayments/interest (Blackwood Software - UK)
Ledgermaster - (4 disks). Combines features of both previous popular packages, Accounts and Accounts Plus into one, includes both Nominal and Analysis options. (Freeway UK)
Page Financial Controller (2 disks) - shareware clone of the similarly named package. Includes sales ledger & statements, invoicing with discounts, purchase ledger with remittances, nominal ledger, cashbook & VAT. Stock/order processing & job costing, network ready (Page Consultants UK). Hard disk required.
Payroll (3 disks) - latest legislation, (Freeway UK).

GRAPHICS

Altamira - design posters, cards, logos, garden floor plans.
Clip Art 1 (3 disks) - approx. 120 trade logos/computer motifs for use with Timeworks Ventura.
Clip Art 2 (3 disks) - approx. 200 images including Dollar, Dwarf, IBM, Piano, Scissors etc. for use with Timeworks/Ventura.
Dancad (2 disks) - from simple letterheads to complex 3D cog-wheels with animation & rotation, now has support for post-script laser printers (hard disk req).
DROEGE (2 disks) - Printed Circuit Board Design.
Draft Choice - one of the easier to use CAD systems which includes drop-down menus, on-line help, drawing, editing, viewing, measurement/query options plus more from the authors of As Easy As (Trius)
Express Graph - 3D bar charts, pie charts, line graphs etc. from entered or imported data.
Finger Paint - paint program with Mac-like screen
Gem Drawings/Paintings - Fun collection of images including Dinosaur, Ghost Busters Logo, Star Ship Enterprise etc.
NorthCad 3D (formerly Quest 3D) - is a new version of this wire frame modelling system with view, zoom etc, now support CGA, EGA and VGA!
PC Key Draw (4 disks) - latest version of popular CAD package now includes library disk, tutorial, and manual disks with superb demo and utility to convert graphics to IMG format for DTP.
Quickroute - multi-layer PCB design with autorouter, zoom, pan redraw, menus, windows (Frost).
Slide Presentation - use camera to take snapshots of screen, then display as at a slide-show, ideal for training, demonstrations etc.
Smart Art (2 disks) - clip art collection in *.IMG* format including Animals, Insects, Reptiles, People, Vehicles, Business etc. (Bennett).

EDUCATIONAL/STATISTICS

Amy's First Primer (ages 4-8) - new compiled version, is a collection of fun games for young children that help them with skills like counting, letter recognition, simple problem solving, pattern recognition and keyboard use.
Arcus Professional (4 disks) - Statistical package including Student's T-Test, F-Test, Z-Test, also linear, geometric & exponential regression analysis, Chi/Fishers/Irwins etc. (Buchan)
Childrens Games (ages 4-8) - hangman, alphabet, animals etc.
Eclipse - word and grammer game like hangman except guess words from document rather than letters from a word (J Higgins)
Flash Cards (4 disks) - 7,500 word vocabulary builder and spelling teacher (Advanced)
French Tutor - 1,648 French/English word combinations, 3,200 verb conjugations and 196 French/English phrase combinations.
Funnels & Buckets - Simple arithmetic tuition with arcade type action.
Fun with Designs - creative drawing program for young children. (Wescott)
Fun with Letters & Words - Educational games for the very young. (Wescott)
GCSE Physics / Computer Science / Mathematics (3 disks available separately) - exam revision.
German Tutor - 1,600 German/English word combinations, 3,875 verb conjugations and 160 German/English phrase combinations.
IQ Builder - intelligence testing.
Italian Tutor - 816 Italian/English word combinations, 1500 verb conjugations and 114 Italian/English phrase combinations.
Lisa's Adding & Quiz Machine - quiz generator and practice program for addition, subtraction.
Maths/Statistics - 26 maths routines including prime factors, vector analysis, linear interpolation, gaussian quadrature etc., plus 18 stats calculations including Mann-Whitney, Chi-square, students, T-test, multiple linear regression etc.
Memory Master - Improve memory powers with these techniques.
PC CAI - a computer assisted learning language that allows you to write tutorials, tests, rolling demos, etc.
PC Learning Games (3 disks) - series of programs for 2-8 year olds includes simple arithmetic, word & letter recognition, basic keyboard skills, colours & shapes (Protean)
PC Prompt - pop-up help with DOS commands/syntax.
Play 'n' Learn (ages 2-4) - for the very young, alphabet recognition, computer reaction etc, including Amandas Letter Lotto.
Spanish Tutor - 1,550 Spanish/English word combinations, 3,596 verb conjugations and 150 Spanish/English phrase combinations.
Tutor - introductions to computers, binary numbers and the CPU, input/output devices, Disk Operating System, subdirectory structures, batch files etc.
Whiz Quiz - arithmetic/elementary mathematics, self grading according to age of user.
Word Gallery - Flashcards with matching, missing letters, spelling, word guessing (EGA/VGA - Kinderware)
World Atlas - produces views and maps for areas around a chosen point, allowing selection of resolution size etc.

LANGUAGES/PROGRAMMING

A86/D86 - probably the best 8086 assembler/disassembler around.
Basic Aids (4 disks) - G.W. basic.
B-Window/C-Window - windowing utils for Basic & C.
C Tutorial - for beginners to advanced.
C Spot Run (2 disks) - window and menu utils for C programmers.
Hyperpad (5 disks) - similar to the Apple Mac's Hypercard, an object-oriented application development system, complete with more than two dozen personal applications (hard disk req. - Brightbill - Roberts)
Logo - Jem version of turtle-based graphics language, popular with children.
Modula 2 Compiler (3 disks) - new version (2.0A) of this flexible but very powerful programming language.
Modula 2 Tutorial (2 disks) - companion to the above.
MVP Forth (2 disks) - full implementation.
Pascal - three compilers on one disk, Tiny, Facillis & Visible.
Prolog - ADA implementation of 5th generation AI language.
Quickbasic - tools and utils.
SDA (2 disks) - design screens for data input (Basic).
Turbo C Tutor (2 disks)
Turbo Pascal Tutor (2 disks)
Tutbo Pascal Library (12 disks) - routines, programs, utils, statistics, sprites, animation, tools and much more.

UTILITIES

Ample Notice - appointments calendar, pop-up alarm clock, sideways addressing util for envelopes, can use data directly from the screen.

Automenu - popular front end allowing multiple levels of menu, password, uses minimum memory, network support etc. Magee.

Label Maker/News Editor - design labels and include graphics from NewsMaster graphics editor (Desai UK).
Professional Masterkey - disk utils like Nortons including file recovery, unerase etc.
Ram Test - chip diagnostics.
SimCGA - colour graphics simulator for Hercules cards, runs most CGA software.
Sydex Utilities (2 disks) - including Anadisk for analysing whats REALLY! on a disk, Teledisk which can make an image of a complete disk with sub-directories etc (even some protected disks) which you can then download or upload with the help of a modem, and utils and emulator to handle over 100 CP/M formats on your PC.
Vmix (2 disks) - multi-user operating system along the lines of unix, adjusts itself to 8088 or 80286.
Zapcode - (optionally) Memory resident printer control utility to select fonts, margins etc for use with dot-matrix, laser, inkjet etc (Morton Utilities)

SPECIAL INTEREST

Astrology/Horoscopes - birth signs, zodiacs etc.
Bible (7 disks) - includes Samfindex to allow quick search and retrieval of words, phrases etc (Bayliss UK). Hard disk required

Crystal Ball - a computerized "psychic" makes predictions and answers (R.K. West)

ESIE - configurable expert system including example which works out childs illness from questions and answers.

Fortune Teller - divination system including One Card Fortune, Three Card, Detailed Card Layout, Quick Numerology, Dice etc (R.K. West)

Genealogy - EZ tree traces and plots your ancestral roots.
Handwriting Analyst - personality analyses system of graphology, often used when evaluating job candidates (Careersoft)
Handwriting/Numerology - Handwriting and numbers analysis for those who can feel the 'Vibrations'. Also includes Biorhythms.
Personal Tarot - enjoy professional quality Tarot card readings on your PC, easy to use, flexible, customizable with professional looking reports.
Pianoman - play, enter and save tunes, also construct stand alone tunes.
Procon Fortune - analysis of personality according to both Western & Eastern astrology. Also compatability ratings, etc.
The Diet Disk - has several calculations for average weight loss, calories needed etc and shopping list showing calories.

COMMUNICATIONS

Fido - very popular bulletin board system with E-mail facilities and network capabilities, several in use throughout UK/Europe/USA.
Kermit (2 disks) - file transfer between mainframes/PC's, many non-IBM machines catered for.
PC VT - DEC VT 102/100/52 terminal emulation with file transfer.
Odyssey - powerful but flexible package with many extras.
Wildcat (2 disks) - new bulletin board system which is easy to set up but very impressive.

SOFTWARE

PC File V		£89.00
As Easy As		£45.00
Automenu		£55.00
Page Financial Controller		£125.00
PC Outline		£59.00
Power Menu		£59.00
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MISCELLANEOUS

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Library Additions - if you have written a shareware program and would like us to distribute it, please forward a copy with description for consideration.
Support - We will be pleased to help you to load and run all the programs we distribute, but we cannot give support, or written documentation/manuals etc for un-registered shareware, as this would be a breach of the author's copyright.

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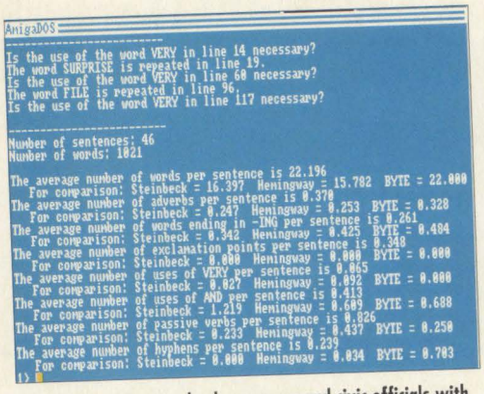

AmigaDOS
Is the use of the word VERY in line 14 necessary?
The word SURPRISE is repeated in line 19.
Is the use of the word VERY in line 68 necessary?
The word FILE is repeated in line 96.
Is the use of the word VERY in line 117 necessary?
Number of sentences: 46
Number of words: 1021
The average number of words per sentence is 22.196
For comparison: Steinbeck = 16.397 Hemingway = 15.782 BYTE = 22.000
The average number of adverbs per sentence is 0.370
For comparison: Steinbeck = 0.247 Hemingway = 0.253 BYTE = 0.328
The average number of words ending in -ING per sentence is 0.261
For comparison: Steinbeck = 0.342 Hemingway = 0.425 BYTE = 0.484
The average number of exclamation points per sentence is 0.348
For comparison: Steinbeck = 0.000 Hemingway = 0.000 BYTE = 0.000
The average number of uses of VERY per sentence is 0.065
For comparison: Steinbeck = 0.027 Hemingway = 0.092 BYTE = 0.000
The average number of uses of AND per sentence is 0.413
For comparison: Steinbeck = 1.219 Hemingway = 0.609 BYTE = 0.688
The average number of passive verbs per sentence is 0.026
For comparison: Steinbeck = 0.233 Hemingway = 0.437 BYTE = 0.250
The average number of hyphens per sentence is 0.239
For comparison: Steinbeck = 0.000 Hemingway = 0.034 BYTE = 0.703
1>_

Fool teachers, impress bank managers and civic officials with *Grammar*. It even compares your style to classic American authors Steinbeck and Hemmingway

Fine. You scored with Shaz – or avoided being scored with – but now have trouble constructing anything more intricate than a Sun leader, and that's where *Grammar* can help.

Grammar runs from the command line, but don't let that worry you. CD (Change Directory) into the program's directory, enter

GRAMMAR

followed by the name of the file you want it to check then, sit back and watch it all happen. As well as the stylistic faults mentioned above, the program also picks up occurrences of the words 'that', 'very' and 'like', provides passive noun counts (with comparisons to the likes of american authors such as John Steinbeck and Earnest Hemmingway) and generally points out where you've gone wrong.

And very good it all is, too. Of course, no computer program is infallible and there are on or two little things that *Grammar* doesn't pick up on (certain double negatives for example). But on the whole and taken in the spirit it is intended – lightly – the program is a rather natty little aid to writing style.

Write rivals to the 'greats' and impress your old English teacher with the aid of *Grammar 1.5*.

AMIGA 65%

cont. from p60

otherwise of your grammar.

Way back in the mists of time, while you were trying to date Shaz 'Willing' Watson (or trying to avoid being dated by that gang who nicknamed you 'Willing Watson', Sharon...) the rest of the kids in class were devoting themselves to becoming familiar with the intricacies of the English language. Sure, it's obscure, stupid even, but essential to effective communications in the adult world.

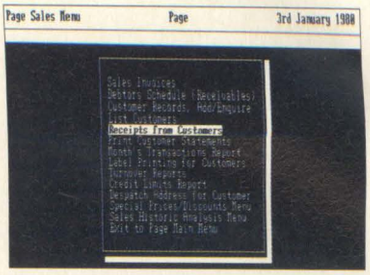
Page Financial Controller (Shareware)

PC • Advantage
56 Bath Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

Page Financial Controller is a complete suite of accounting software for your business. Everything from sales, purchase and nominal ledgers to stock control, job costing, invoices and ordering to PAYE-approved salary handling is included in this monster accounts program. There's just so much here, you'll need a college certificate in business studies (or whatever it is they give to those who grub about in other people's money...) just to to use it.

Page Financial Controller is accompanied by the most massive set of doc files and printable manuals ever seen in a shareware package. You're constantly urged to follow the tutorial, even if you're not interested in a particular topic, because otherwise it's possible to miss out on a whole lot of functions.

OK, so I'm not exactly an independent financial parasi... ahem, adviser, but even to my untrained eyes, *PFC* looks like the last word in financial flim-flammery, decimal



The *Page Financial Controller* provides full integrated accounting for large and small business alike (Maximum turnover is £99,999,00)

double-dealing and monetary manipulation.

Possibly the shortest review in the section for what must be the largest program, but if you're knowledgeable about such subjects, I recommend that you get hold of a copy and try it for yourself. Even at nearly £150, the package won't disappoint (and remember, if it does, just delete it and use the disk as a drinks coaster, wallet still intact!)

PC 80%

The automatic way to keep in contact with your contacts

Marketeer 2.1 (Shareware)

PC • BA100 • Fantasia Shareware
PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol
☎ 0761 453716

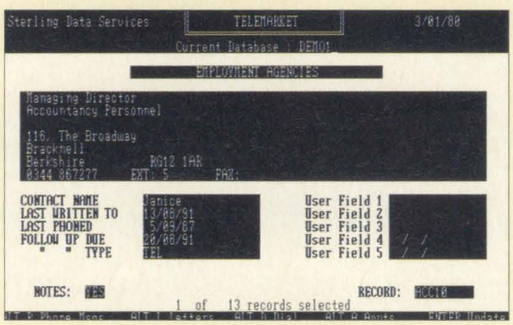
Those of you who spend your working life hassling respectable private citizens (ie mugs...) by calling them up and encouraging them to buy useless products have just struck gold. *Marketeer* describes itself as a contacts manager and sales prospecting system and is the ultimate tool in organising your lists of victi...ahem, contacts.

Until now, keeping track of who you'd talked or written to and exactly what you'd sold to them required mountains of grubby bits of paper, the backs of fag packets, betting slips and so on which you'd always promised to write up into a neat ledger but, somehow, a packet of Walkers cheese and onion and a tinny always got in the way. So why not transfer it all to the dear old PC? Mountains of unintelligible data are meat and drink to the average IBM compatible, and *Marketeer* is the software interface between the two.

The program enables you to keep extensive lists of telephone calls, mail shots and meetings, cross reference and edit them on the fly – while you're talking to a particular contact on the telephone for instance – and generally manipulate the data so that you never need to retrace old (and possibly cold) footsteps again.

A plethora of features

Marketeer features a built-in word processor to create letters from its data files, a plethora of pop-up menus and the simplest on-screen menu system to ensure that even commercial travellers with the meanest IQ can operate the program successfully.



An absolute must for sales-persons everywhere, *Marketeer* is a monster contacts manipulation tool to simplify your life...

And still the features keep coming! There's password protection of sensitive data, an on-screen phone call timer to keep your bills in the black, a calendar, a scientific calculator, an appointment scheduler with a graphical display of your remaining free time for any week, unlimited databases each with an unlimited number of prospects and customers... in fact, if you sell for living and have dreamt of some feature which would make your life that much easier, you can bet this program has it.

The author Mike McLoughlin has obviously researched his subject and created a program which really does the job.

There's just one downside – a really lousy installation program which – unless I was doing something wrong – refused to unpack the self-decompressing program files. I had to copy them into a sub-directory and decompress them manually. A drag, but worth it for the resulting program.

For PC-owning sales persons, getting a copy of Marketeer is the best £39 quid you'll ever spend (that's the registration fee, y'see).

PC 90%

Personal Database Plus (Shareware)

ST • Bay Computers
3 Teasel Walk, Morecombe, Lancashire LA3 3QQ

One of the best features of public domain software is that it gives you a chance to try before you buy. That is, you can acquire the cut-down public domain version of a program you're

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- CALENDAR MATE Prints customised calendars
- EARLY BIRD Slick new desktop toolbox.

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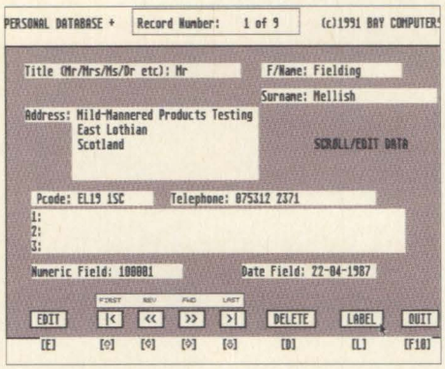
cont. from p62

interested in, try it out for a week or two to determine whether it matches your requirements, and shell out the dosh for the full shareware or commercial version only when you're sure it's what you want.

Personal Database Plus is an ultra-cheap commercially available database with one distinct advantage over many of its rivals – there's a lightly edited PD version to enable you to determine suitability. This version will do everything that the program with the price ticket does, but it's limited to 10 records.



What could be easier? Everything available from a front-end menu and the ST's function keys make *Personal Database Plus* one of the simplest databases around

PDP is a combined database and text editor with label printing as an added, and extremely useful, extra. Control is via a single menu front end which is activated with the function keys. To open an existing database, for example, you press F2. F3 initiates searching and F5 summons the text editor. You don't even have to remember which keys are which because their functions are displayed on the front-end menu – idiot-proof data manipulation.

The text editor is appalling! It is stuck in overwrite mode, so to insert characters into existing lines you have to make space using the Insert key, a process which would be primitive on an Oric 1 and should not be seen on an ST. There are no italics, no underlining and no justification either, so if you want these functions, you'll have to port in text from your favourite word processor. The text scrolling is horrendous, with the lines limping past like the batteries in their pacemakers need replacing.

To be fair, the text editor is intended to be a quick hack – a convenient method of getting text into the labels, and the software is free in this incarnation and cheap, commercially. But, to be honest, I can't help wondering why Bay Computers bothered.

To balance these criticisms, the mail merge label printing works well and there are three label masks to suit your needs. The database is also a snip to use, has a pretty screen and is clear and unfussy.

A database for dabblers at a dabbler's price.

ST **50%**

BOOT.SYS (Shareware)

PC • The Thompson Partnership Church Croft, Bramshall, Ottoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 5DE ☎ 0889 564601

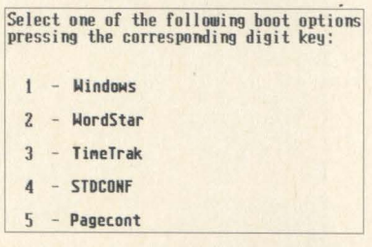
BOOT.SYS falls unashamedly into the 'techie utilities' category, but it's so useful – even for business users – I'm going to tell you about it any way! But first, some background information.

As most business users are well aware, the problems of installing, configuring and running all their favourite applications are many and varied. The problem is, Application X may require the system to be configured to work with 60 open files, or require more buffers than other programs can cope with. The result is that you're constantly rewriting CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files to meet the needs of the software you want to run at any given time. And for most business users, that's a real pain in the ass.

It was bad enough writing the things in the first place without constantly having to search through DOS manuals trying to figure out the correct way to change drive parameters, allow more open files on the system or run a mouse driver. And that's just where this neat little utility steps into the fray.

Install *BOOT.SYS* and you're start-up troubles are over. The program boots the PC with a series of menus which enable you to select exactly which options from any .SYS or .BAT file you're likely to need during the current session. And what that means is that you can lock out the obscure PC system commands which aren't needed, installing only those which are, without ever having to COPY a new CONFIG.SYS file to CON again!

Of course, *BOOT.SYS* has an initial set-up procedure all of its own


Select one of the following boot options pressing the corresponding digit key:
1 - Windows
2 - WordStar
3 - TimeTrak
4 - STDCONF
5 - Pagecont

Forget the problems of application installation! With *BOOT.SYS* in the background, complex configuration is a thing of the past...

(you didn't expect to get away that easily, right?), but it's straightforward enough for all but the most hardened techno-phobe – and just think of the benefits once it's installed...

Shareware registration fee £29

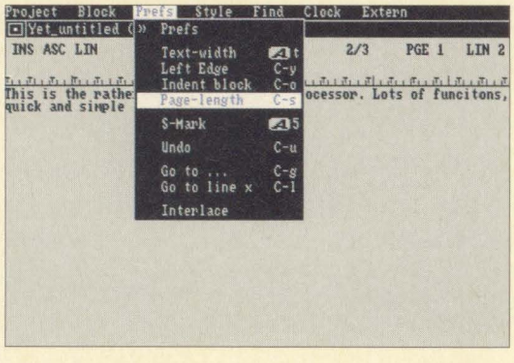
PC **70%**

Putting Text to the test – word processing on the Amiga

Text Plus (Shareware)

Amiga • 104 • Amiganuts 169 Dale Valley Road, Southampton SO1 6QX.

You know, life's kinda funny (said in a slushy, American 'kinda' way...) Just when you think you've discovered an unsung great of the Amiga text processing world, up pops another which blows everything else off the page.



The second of this month's word processors for the Amiga. More features than the dark side of the moon (and easier to find...)

The first indication of this surprising phenomenon is the doc file which accompanies *Text Plus*. Unlike other disk-based manuals thrown together in the dead of night after 16 straight hours of final bug tracking, the *Text Plus* docs have been written like they were aimed right at the Booker prize. A stunningly smooth upwards scroll with just the right amount of backward 'robotic' click combined with a full contents list and neat, readable layout makes reading the docs a pleasure – you just know something good is on its way.

And when *Text Plus* finally makes it to your screen, you are left in no doubt that professional text editing is just a key- press away. Look at that clock/date display, continuous line and column, mode and page read-out and much, much more. It's got one of those nasty tab combs I'm not too fond of at the top of the screen but at least it's not as intrusive as some of its rivals. I'd still prefer the program without it, but maybe I'm in a minority.

Well endowed

Features include well-drawn sub-menus, hot-keys, 20 programmable function keys, superb on-line help, access to system-level commands from within the program, full control over printing (yet another snazzy configuration window), footnotes, current document iconify which helps to free up memory for multi-tasking and so much more that to list all of them would require a dozen pages and a hefty stretch of your credibility.

Not quite as likable as *Transcript* (although in fairness to *'Plus* I can't quite put my finger on why) but an altogether superior word processor which anyone with slightly more than a laundry list would be advised to seek out.

AMIGA **80%**

Reminder (PD)

ST • Caledonia PDL 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT

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cont. from p64

```
***  Checking for up-coming events
-------------------------------------------------
Todays date: April 22, 1987

Today is My Birthday (as if I needed reminding...) (4/22
-------------------------------------------------
Press any key to continue...
```

Now you'll never be shame-faced about forgetting Granny's birthday – *Reminder*'ll remind you

anniversaries and such like. *Reminder* installs itself via an Auto folder and checks a previously created file of important dates every time the machine is booted. If it discovers that an event is only minutes (or days, or weeks even...) away, up it pops to remind you of the fact!

With *Reminder*, world events are always at your fingertips. The program works by checking the system time then searching through a previously created text file for matching dates. If it makes a suitable discovery, up it comes with the info.

Of course, you'll need to set the system clock before *Reminder* can do its stuff – otherwise the ROM date based somewhere in 1987 won't do much for your social calendar. But that isn't too big a problem, because most serious users have a clock card of some kind, or a hard drive with a built-in clock to set the system time and date. Simple to use and effective.

ST **65%**

ST CAD (Shareware)

ST • Elmsoft
PO Box 17, Loughton, Essex
IG10 2EE

ST CAD is one of those programs which turns novice PDers right off! Boot up this program and even a degree in Computer Science won't get you far – the program couldn't be more obscure if it was deliberately designed that way. That's *ST CAD* straight into the trash, right?

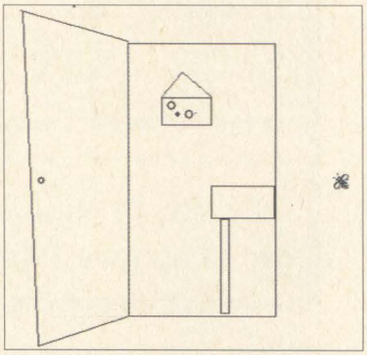
Wrong! When did you last see a CAD package with a price tag less than a hundred quid? OK, so the program may be a little esoteric but at this price (the shareware contribution is voluntary) can you afford to ignore it? Perhaps *ST CAD* is worth a second look.

But first, a definition. For those of you unfamiliar with the acronym, CAD stands for Computer Aided Design and involves constructing elaborate drawings on a computer screen by telling the computer where key pixel points are, and letting it get on with the drudgery of working out the points in between. This enables users to create complex and delicate plans, then manipulate them through three dimensions without having to work out all the boring details.

At least, that's the theory. In practice, you still need to know exactly what you're doing before attempting to construct anything. There are several CAD packages available for the ST including the evergreen *CAD-3D*, but they're way outside the software budgets of all but the most hardened, and rich, draftsman.

Enter *ST CAD*. Programmed by Israeli STer Yaron Kidron, it's an attempt to put computer-aided design into the hands of 'the rest of us' and it really is rather good. The program handles up to 5,000 plotted points on over 2,500 frames, which is pretty funky by any standards. There are dozens of built-in drawing functions including frames, lines, ovals, circles and the like, 37 fill patterns, a paint mode, freehand mode and much more.

Sure, there's the dreadful command line interpreter you have to use to instruct the program, but once you've remembered a command or two, it all starts to unravel. Soon you're designing sheds, wheelchairs and inflatable companions with the best of 'em. If you can cope with commands, and don't mind an hour or two poring over the on-disk manual, *ST CAD* may be the one for you.



In spite of the foul command line front-end, *ST CAD* offers designers a wealth of tools and some complex features and functions

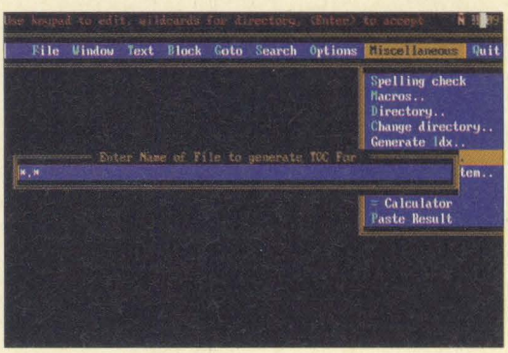
ST **55%**

More text adventures – word processing on the PC

Word Fugue (Shareware)

PC • Advantage
56 Bath Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7HJ. ☎ 0242 224340

Word Fugue is, by it's own admission, a heavyweight of the word processing world. Silly really, because with it's extensive pull down menu system, context-sensitive help and marvellous function arrangement, the program is absolutely ideal for even the most computer-illiterate bod.



***Word Fugue* provides simple-to-use menus which enables even rank beginners to access its most powerful features**

Extensive on-disk docs and tutorials guide you through the comprehensive command list, then all you have to do is type WF at the prompt to fire up the program and start writing.

Word Fugue features up to eight open documents, all of which can be sized and placed anywhere on screen, or zoomed to fill the screen, and, of course, there's full cut, copy and paste facilities between all documents. The program's command sequences are structured so that touch-typists need never take their hands away from the home line – and in these days of multi-function software, that's a rarity! There's nothing worse for accomplished typists than to be constantly moving their hands away from the centre of action.

Excellent printer support is provided. You choose a printer driver from a pop-up pick-list which means that you can switch between printers at any time – dot matrix for rough work, daisy wheel or laser when quality matters – without having to traverse an obscure set-up procedure. Printing is performed as a background task so you can continue with important work while your printer chugs away.

There's a 100,000 word dictionary which should satisfy most needs and you can add to it, or create auxiliary dictionaries for specialist words that you might use in your work.

These are a just a few of the everyday features, but what about the fully user-definable macros to automate almost everything except the actual writing? And if you can't be bothered to specify what you want from a macro, simply set the program to record keystrokes and create one automatically!

Word Fugue generates indexes and tables of contents without fuss, draws lines and boxes from within a pop-up box, provides a DOS shell, pop-up calculator, newspaper-style columns (each with separate word wrap and justification...) and supports all popular display adaptors including Hercules and VGA.

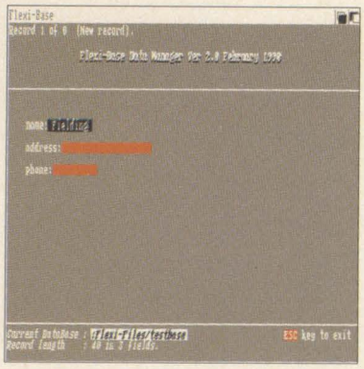
All in all, an excellent and adaptable word processor which will suit the needs of almost everyone (and it's an absolute snip at a registration fee of £45).

PC **90%**

FlexiBase (PD)

Amiga • 1550 • Crazy Joe's
145 Effingham Street,
Rotherham S65 1BL
☎ 0709 829286

There used to be a dearth of decent databases for the Amiga and those that were available cost a couple of limbs. Nowadays, all that has changed. Dozens of databases vie for your attention but somehow, well,



***FlexiBase*: A startlingly good database scrunched down into just 30K of code**

they're just not very usable, you know? There's always some strange format to follow, or else the set-up procedure takes two weeks so that by the time you reach the database, all you wanna do is hit Ctrl-A-A!

And that's what prompted Andy Henderson to craft the code for *FlexiBase*, a meagre Amiga application (just 30K) which really does the job.

Database creation begins with the inevitable set-up procedure. But rather than torturous in-application construction, a little CLI window opens and prompts you for the field-names – names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc. Following that, the database sheet is displayed and you click and drag the field names to the desired location on the sheet – a novel and inspired idea, it makes designing a doddle .

What it all amounts to is a fast, straightforward set-up process that doesn't put you off database-building for life. It also equates to complete freedom of data structure, so you can use *FlexiBase* to store everything from club records to CD collections or anything else you can think of.

All data is held in memory which really helps the program to zip along at top speed when searching for records, but it's a good idea to perform lots of saves, particularly after editing – if the machine goes down, your data goes with it! There's a comprehensive search function, a moderately fast sort option and good editing control.

Here's a strange thing, though. Why is it that authors of crap such as last issue's *AmiBase Pro II* constantly trumpet their programs' supposed and imagined features, yet the programmers of useful little bits of code like *FlexiBase* pepper their programs with terrified apologies for poor coding? At one point Henderson tells us that we'll probably think he's "...a prat" – not a bit of it!

Fast, efficient and without any pretensions – well worth a look.

AMIGA **65%**

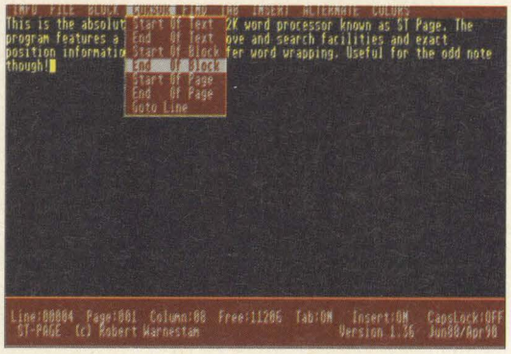
ST Page (PD)

ST • Softville
Unit 5, Elettra Avenue, Stratfield Park, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 7XN

ST Page is a feature-packed word processor which remarkably requires only 12K of valuable disk or RAM memory space. Compare that with the several hundred Kilobytes necessary to get the average commercial offering up and running, and you'll soon realise that *Page* could be a boon to everyone with limited disk-buying funds and half-meg machinery.

The program runs in medium resolution to provide an 80 column editing screen. The first thing you'll notice after booting is that there's no mouse control despite the comprehensive menu bar. To access those menu options, you hold down the Control key and use the cursor keys.

Sounds clumsy? It isn't! Quite often, when you're in the middle of a really big file, it can be a drag to switch between keyboard and mouse whenever you want to access some feature or other. Industry standard word processors, such as Microsoft *Word* for the Apple Mac, enable you to access menus using the cursor commands – try it once, and you're hooked. Well now that feature is available for the ST, and it sure speeds things up.



No word wrap, but *ST Page* provides fast text editing with search, replace and block functions in only 12K of memory

There is a downside to text editing in 12K. The program doesn't support auto word-wrapping, so at the end of a line you have to press return before continuing. And that really is a drag!

To counter-balance the lack of word-wrap, there are good search and replace facilities, simple block marking and moving, and you can even change *Page*'s display colours by choosing from an extensive list. The program generates standard ASCII files too, so you can port its files into other programs.

And there, in fact, is the clue to its ideal use. *ST Page* is wonderful as a companion to a DTP package. Requiring few overheads, you can store it on-disk alongside much-used serious stuff and access it at will without having to mess around finding the right disk.

ST **70%**

mCAD (Shareware)

Amiga • U078 • Strictly PD
11 York Place, Brandon Hill, Bristol BS1 5UT

Now the last thing the Amiga is short of is a painting or drawing program.

cont. on p68

Get this essential DTP program before the coder starves!

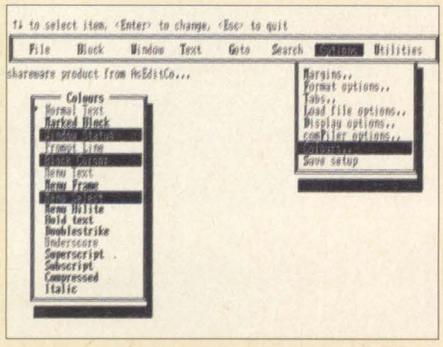
EasyEdit II (Shareware)

PC • AsEditCo
Warren Cottage, Warren Lane, Elmswell, Suffolk IP30 9DT
☎ 0359 41601

There's just one strange thing about a really good word processor: why anyone bothered to write it in the first place! What do I mean? Well imagine the work which goes into producing something of the calibre of *EasyEdit II*, the hundreds of lost nights spent poring over buggy code trying to get the next amazing feature to work properly, and all for a word processor which has to take its chances with many other excellent word processors.

Ours, I suppose, is not to reason why, and if guys like Alan Sharkey want to torch years of their lives in the service of good software, who are we to complain?

Anyway, that's just what the man has done – produced an excellent word processor with the kind of features which can only be dreamed of by those using machines other than a PC. *EasyEdit II* is littered with the flotsam and jetsam of everyday text editing such as an 80,000-word dictionary, full search and replace, multiple open files with cut and paste between them and comprehensive printer support, but that's just the tip of the iceberg...



The cheapest fully-featured word processor around – how can Alan Sharkey afford to sell it for just £35!

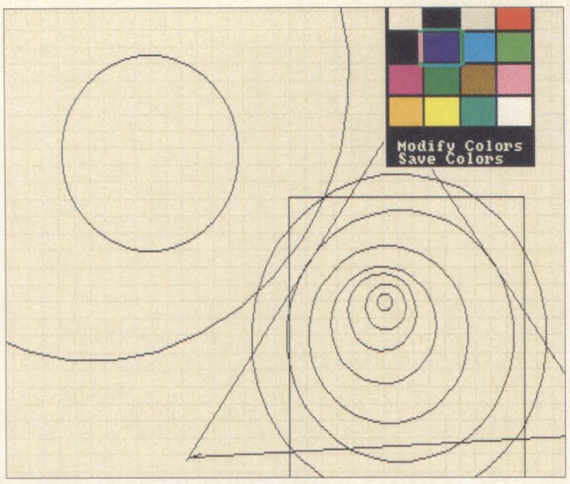
Macros with auto-record, context-sensitive help, a full menu front-end, support for programmers (matching pairs location, auto-indenting and the like...) and mouse support, but one of the best features is that the program will work as a TSR (Terminate Stay Resident) which means that you can exit the program but it remains in memory so that you can return to it at any time. Imagine quitting your compiler and using a simple key-sequence to summon the word processor – the usual editor-compiler-editor-compiler tedium is wiped at a stroke!

All that, and *EasyEdit II* provides abbreviation expansion, full network support with file locking and a registration price tag of an unbelievable £35. *£35!* How can the man do it and continue to feed himself? Get in their with your registration before he expires from malnutrition...

PC **95%**

cont. from p67

There must be 1,001 commercial and PD offerings vying for your attention and your wallet's contents, but only one or two ever make it to the big time – unfortunately, usually those with the huge prices. So when something comes along which enables you to construct detailed drawings of complex figures and that something is available for $20, you're going to sit up and take notice, right?



***mCAD*: it may well be the prettiest colour chooser around, but it's not enough to promote a program equalled only by American football for abject dullness**

Me too. Unfortunately, in the case of *mCAD* you might just as well sit right back down again. The program opens to display a gridded screen. A click on the right mouse button summons a menu bar, and from that, you can elect to draw circles, lines, arcs, boxes... in fact all the tired old CAD tools available from every other CAD program.

And basically that's the problem with *mCAD*. It works well enough but offers absolutely nothing that isn't available elsewhere (and usually on programs with far more functions).

Using the progra also has a very sludgy feel, like you're pushing that mouse around a few fathoms deeper than the resting Titanic, and of course a CAD program with an underwater feel doesn't offer much in the way of accuracy.

There's not much else to say. You can perform rotations, select from a variety of lines and colours and add text to the results. The colour chooser box from the menu bar is the best feature in a program that is pathologically dull.

And by the way. You might like to know that the guy who wrote the on-disk doc file has an account on an American conferencing system with the absolutely puke-making name of *PeopleLink* – ugh!

AMIGA **40%**

DTP A5 (PD)

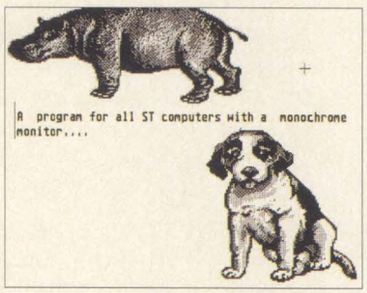
ST • DTP 0009 • Caledonia PDL 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT.

DTP A5 began life as a quick'n'dirty hack to get little pictures and fragments of text onto label-sized bits of paper. From those humble beginnings, the program has grown to the point where today you can mix pictures and fragments of text on sightly-larger-than-label-sized bits of paper.

Before we go any further I'm gonna come clean and tell you that I loathe this program – acrimony second only to that felt by Oedipus for his old man. *DTP A5* has for me, all the appeal of a pricked balloon.

OK, so it's free, but if it's also crap, why pull punches? The only possible use for any software is that it performs some useful task. *DTP A5* is a contender for desktop publishing like Douglas Bader was a contender for a *Come Dancing* award. *DTP A5* is the sort of program that gives the public domain a bad name.

So. What does it do? It imports *Neochrome* and funny-format pictures and ASCII text onto a blank screen and enables you to position them, save the finished conglomeration and print it. Unlike other DTP packages, you don't import into frames. After issuing the relevant commands, the screen clears and the imported text or picture is displayed. You crop it by clicking and dragging with the mouse. The screen changes back to the original, flickering like a demented North Sea lighthouse, while you try (usually in vain) to position the cropped image or text accurately.



Billed as the only PD ST desktop publisher, *DTP A5* is a program to avoid

And that's it.

ST **10%**

Take another step closer to the paperless office

DT Search & Retrieve (Shareware)

PC • Advantage
56 Bath Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

As a business computer user, you're well aware that the paperless office is an impossible dream. Sure, it'd be wonderful if every bit of text you generated or gathered from external sources was disk-bound and machine-manipulatable but it's just a little too much to expect...

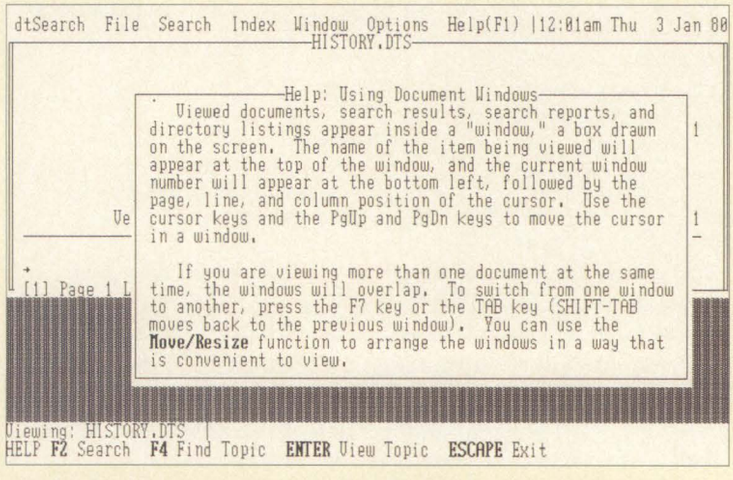
...Or is it? With *DT Search and Retrieve*, the paperless paradise just got one step closer to Earth-bound reality. What *DT Search and Retrieve* does is to enable you to store and manipulate individual, previously paper-based documents. You can also display several on screen in separate windows, edit them, or blend text from any combination of documents in a notepad on-screen.

At last, it's possible to digitise all your important documents (storing the originals safely away) and manipulate them with your PC. Full indexing is provided so that a large collection of documents can be sorted and individual items traced in no time.

Just think of the possibilities of *DT Search and Retrieve* combined with a scanner and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. On-the-fly compaction techniques would keep your collection small enough to be viable and the scanner would negate the need for endless re-typing. Students and writers especially would benefit greatly from such a system, but anyone involved in research should find *DT Search and Retrieve* indispensable.

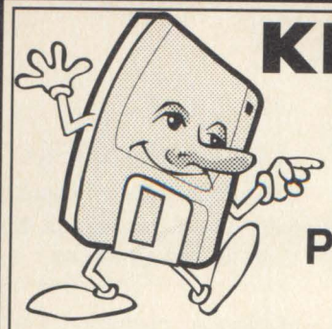
The program is accompanied by the ubiquitous INSTALL.BAT file which creates a folder on your hard drive and bungs it into the relevant code. The screen display is very pretty with sweetly drawn menus, but they're a little slow to appear – there's a noticeable lag when moving along the menu bar. On-line context-sensitive help is available at all times (who said the PC is difficult to learn and use?) and all commands are intuitive and simple.

DT Search and Retrieve is one of those alternative programs which computers everywhere are crying out for and, in this case, the PC is lucky enough to get. It solves a previously insurmountable problem and it solves it cleanly and well. Not bad for a shareware registration fee of £59.


dtSearch File Search Index Window Options Help(F1) 12:01am Thu 3 Jan 80
HISTORY.DTS
Help: Using Document Windows
Viewed documents, search results, search reports, and directory listings appear inside a "window," a box drawn on the screen. The name of the item being viewed will appear at the top of the window, and the current window number will appear at the bottom left, followed by the page, line, and column position of the cursor. Use the cursor keys and the PgUp and PgDn keys to move the cursor in a window.
If you are viewing more than one document at the same time, the windows will overlap. To switch from one window to another, press the F7 key or the TAB key (SHIFT-TAB moves back to the previous window). You can use the Move/Resize function to arrange the windows in a way that is convenient to view.
[1] Page 1 L
Viewing: HISTORY.DTS
HELP F2 Search F4 Find Topic ENTER View Topic ESCAPE Exit

Multi-document manipulation made easy with the off-beat and easy-to-use *DT Search and Retrieve*. It's a must for students, researchers and porn-mag collectors

PC **75%**



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cont. from p68

Quick-Base (PD)

Amiga • 1068 • 17-Bit Software PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982.

Quick-Base is the kind of efficient little utility business users are crying out for. Nothing fancy, no burning the midnight oil poring over unintelligible on-disk manuals, just double-click and get down to business!

The program provides and maintains a database of names and address which you can use to print address labels or to use in form letters and other mail-shots. There's nothing to learn and absolutely no setting up. Double-click on *QB*'s icon to display a colourful and well presented screen with all the options necessary for the task in hand. To add a record you click on Add Record while to delete records you click on Delete Records. If you want to print some labels, select the ones you want to extract from the database and click on Print. It really is that simple.

It's also dead easy to start a new database. After clicking on Add Record to enter the first record, you're prompted for a field name so smoothly that you don't even know it's happening – great for technophobes.

Label and form letter printing made easy by *Quick-Base*. Some nice front-end graphics too

Once you've supplied the fields – name, address, phone number, position in line to the throne, inside leg measurement etc – you add the record. Subsequent adds follow the specified field pattern you've set up with the first record. Although you have to instruct the database in the use of field names, it's all part of one big (actually, rather small) program in contrast with many databases which require separate and often lengthy set-up routines.

Quick-Base is endowed with a delicious front end. It's kind of lo-tech without making you feel stupid, and let's face it, that's just what most of us could do with.

One thing. *Don't* issue a print command without a suitable device attached because if you do you'll get a big fat guru and you'll have to start all over again. It must be possible to trap 'no printer' errors fairly easily, but the feature hasn't been implemented here.

Useful, efficient and fun.

AMIGA **75%**

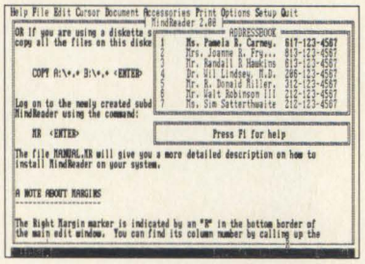
MindReader (Shareware)

PC • Brown Bag Software 2155 South Bascom Avenue, Suite 114, Campbell, CA 95008 ☎ 0101 408 559 4545.

MindReader's been around for a long time, but for those new to the PC and shareware, here's a look at a word processor with a BIG difference – it writes the letters for you! It attempts to pre-empt your next words and sentences by providing what it thinks you might want to write. If it's right, all you have to do is press a key to insert *MindReader*'s guess into your document.

Sounds crazy? Impossible even? Well *MindReader* isn't always right, but it's guesses are accurate enough to ensure that your writing time is significantly shortened.

But that's not all. *MindReader* is intelligent. As you use the program, it 'learns' to write the way you write. Within a few weeks of using it the program will be suggesting words and phrases to you while you're typing, sometimes before you've even completed the current word!


Help File Edit Cursor Document Accessories Print Options Setup Quit
MindReader 2.00
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Mrs. Joanne B. Fry... 813-123-4567
Mr. Randall B Hawkins 813-123-4567
Dr. Gil Lindsey, M.D. 206-123-4567
Mr. R. Donald Miller. 312-123-4567
Mr. Galt Robinson III 516-123-4567
Ms. Sim Satterthwaite 212-123-4567
Press F1 for help

Spooky or what? *Mindreader* can tell you what you're going to type before you know yourself

Brown Bag describes this learning code as an 'artificial intelligence engine' and they've gone as far as to have the program patented.

That's no guarantee of quality, of course, but *MindReader* very nearly lives up to the hype. Just bear in mind that you don't have to pay for the program if, after a test period, you don't want to use it and you won't go far wrong.

MindReader also provides standard word processing tools such as an address book, glossary and calculator. The only problem now is working out how to avoid splitting my freelance fees with this smart-arse software...

ST **65%**

Monitor your phone calls to beat those BT bills blues

FoneCost 2.0 (Shareware)

ST • Ainley Publishing & Communications, 16 Copyground Court, Copyground Lane, High Wycombe HP12 3HG.

For years, BT has been sucking dry the post office accounts of harmless comms enthusiasts with their laughable idea of what constitutes fair pricing policy for phone calls. And until now, there's been no way to avoid the omnipresent menace short of doing certain...ahem, naughty things with a resistor or two and 8 milliamps of looped current.

Well, you still can't avoid paying your phone bill without risking a week or two slopping out at Wormwood Scrubs, but you can accurately monitor what's happening while making a call.

See, it's easy to forget that the minutes are ticking by when you're logged on to your favourite board. Half an hour seems like thirty seconds – until the quarterly horror story arrives, that is.

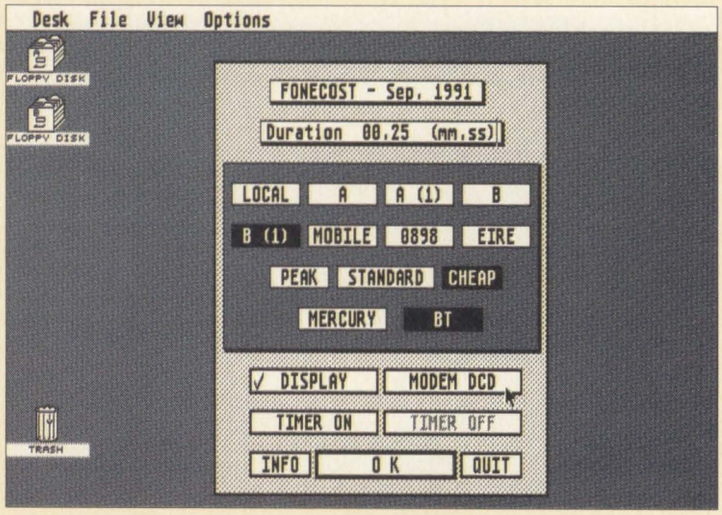
Enter *FoneCost*.

What this ludicrously entitled fragment of code does is to sit in the background counting BT phone units while providing an on-screen, unmissable and ever-increasing counter showing just how much your call is costing.

It runs on all STs, mono and colour, and works as a stand-alone program or desk accessory. By choosing the latter method, the program monitors the ST's RS232 port for a line detect signal and starts to count as soon as there's any activity.

FoneCost contains up-to-date (September 1991) price information for both BT and Mercury, and handles everything from a local call, to a trunk call to Land's End from John 'O Groats. If you've already made a call and want to find out how much it costs, choose a charge band, dial in the duration and seconds later, the damage is displayed on screen. *FoneCost* will even show you the prices with and without VAT.

An excellent manualette accompanies the registered version but there's just one thing. Programmer Richard Gorbutt reckons that, "released a year ago, *FoneCost* received an encouraging response which led to a complete rewrite". If it ain't broken, why fix it?



Drive a stake through BT's vampirish heart with the excellent little charge tracker, *FoneCost*.

ST **90%**

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"... at £60 it's a snip."

... why not try it and see for yourself?

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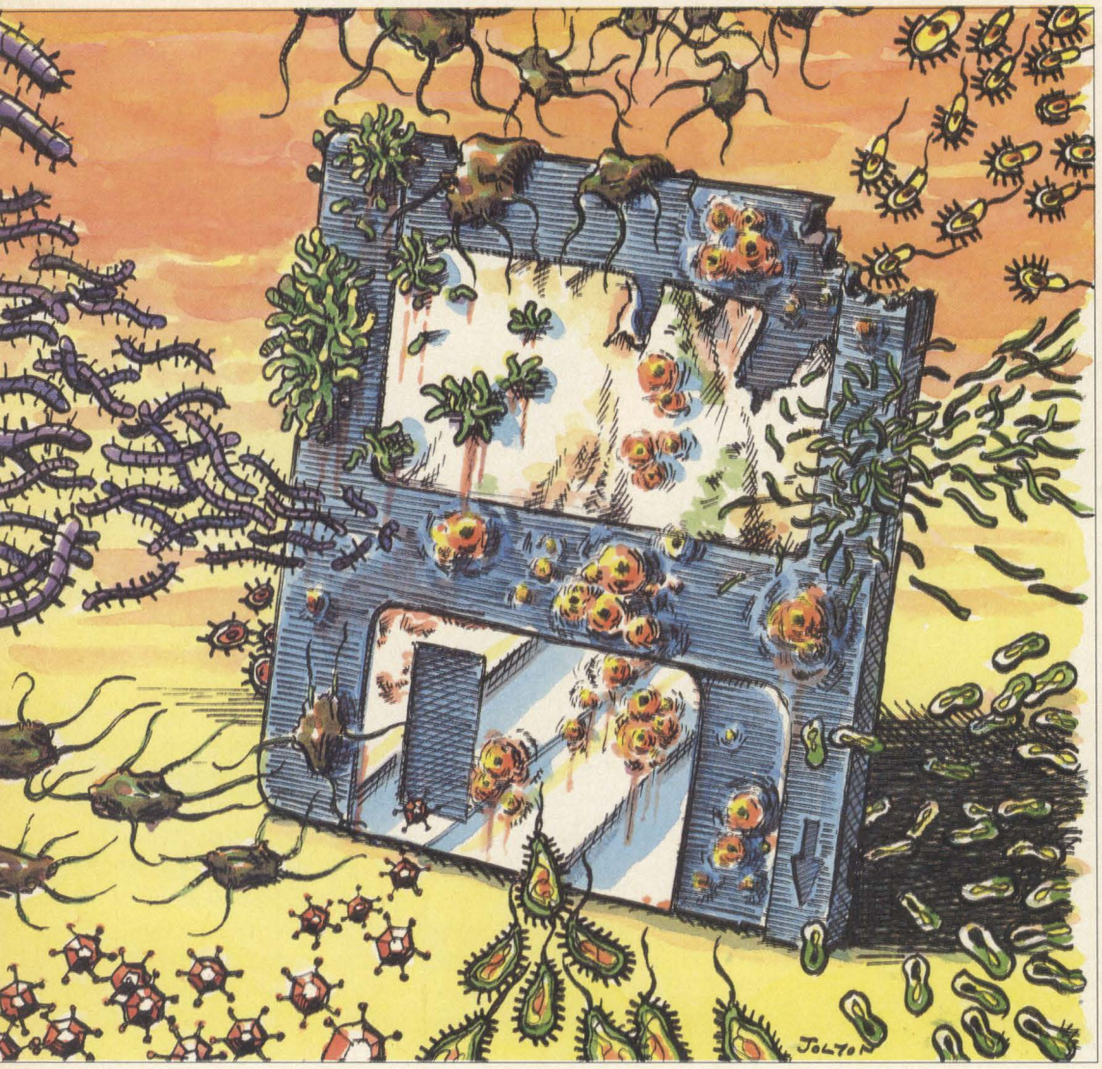


Never in the field of computing has so much trouble been caused for so many by so few bytes. Disk doctor Tim Howell probes the virus menace and prescribes some ways to protect yourself from these binary bacteria...

Viruses are the AIDS of the computer world; load an infected disks into a machine and the virus spreads to its memory; from there it can then infect any other disk inserted into the machine; disks that act as carriers may not always be affected by the virus themselves; a disk may carry a virus for some time before it shows signs of infection; and there are certain areas of the computer-using community which are more at risk. Unfortunately, because of its very free-for-all nature the public domain is one of these areas.

Luckily, viruses can be cured. But before this happens they can cause a lot of irreversible damage, sometimes trashing a whole hard disk, so it's important to be aware of what viruses are, how they can be recognised and how you can get rid of them.

The kill or cure utilities

Some enterprising young coders have gone to all the trouble of writing comprehensive programs that let you design viruses. You choose what characteristics you want your virus to have and then these programs will put your designs into action.

Virus creators, their writers argue, are available so that people can test their own virus checkers and killers. The idea is to design a virus, then adapt your own virus utility so that it can detect the new strain. Oh yeah, and using the M25 during the rush hour is a good short cut.

Spreading alarm

A computer virus is a piece of code running on a computer that duplicates itself by spreading from memory to storage media, such as disk drives. When an infected disk is used on a system, the virus can spread to other disks, and soon, even without the user knowing, the whole system, and every disk that comes into contact with that system, can be infected and destroyed.

Different viruses do different things. At their most destructive they will destroy all the files on your hard drive. Other viruses are less destructive: some alter the way the computer works, turning the screen upside down or giving the mouse pointer a life of its own, while others play simple, but often irritating pieces of music. Humorous messages – or at least their writers think they're humorous – that pop up on your screen are another favourite.

Most viruses act in a similar fashion regardless of

Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strain

There are far to many viruses to be able to list them all, but here's a list of some of the more, er, interesting strains to plague the PC, Amiga and ST. Beware!

PC

With more than 363 viruses to its name, the PC could be called the world's sickest computer.

Many of the viruses on this machine are variations of each other, but some have distinguished themselves both in the computing fraternity and in the national press:

- ***New Zealand/Marijuana/Stoned*** – This prolific virus originated in New Zealand and was responsible for over 30 per cent of the reported virus infections in the UK last year. It displays 'Your Computer Has Been Stoned. Legalise Marijuana' on your screen.
- ***Cascade*** – One of the more novel viruses, it was adapted from a program written as a gimmick. Letters on a text screen appear to fall down the screen.
- ***Jerusalem/Friday 13th*** – Famous for its numerous appearances in the popular press, this virus raises its ugly head each occurrence of Friday the 13th, no matter what the month or year is. There are over 26 variations of the *Jerusalem* virus doing the rounds. The computer press usually gives warnings whenever the fateful date is imminent. (By the way, there's a Friday 13th in December, so don't say that we didn't warn you!)

whether you have an Amiga, PC or ST.

● BOOTBLOCK VIRUSES – The most basic, and the most contagious, of viruses. They plonk themselves in the 'bootblock' of your disk, which is the area where the computer looks first when a disk is put in the machine. Often these disks don't need to be run; simply putting them in your disk drive is sufficient opportunity for the virus to copy itself to RAM and then on to any other disks that are put in the disk drive.

● LINK VIRUSES are also very common. These attach themselves to certain files on a disk — usually system files — and then spread to similar files on other disks when they are inserted into your computer.

● TROJAN HORSES are a type of virus that has been adopted from the type of programs that hackers use to destroy data on mainframe computers. What Trojan horses do is destroy data; the way they do it is by getting into your machine in the guise of some other program. When you try to use this program, the virus runs amok and destroys data. Strictly speaking Trojan horses aren't viruses as most of them are incapable of spreading themselves. However, they do cause destruction and computer users should be aware of their existence.

There are other types of viruses, but most of them are less common than those already listed mainly because they are more difficult to write. These include 'bombs', which are set to 'go off' — that is, perform some strange or dangerous function — when certain special conditions are met. This could be a specific day or time, after a program has been run a certain number of times or a particular period of time after the computer has been switched on.

Viruses are capable of doing many things, and one of the most common effects is to corrupt the on-screen text

Size is everything

Regardless of whether they are dangerous or not, viruses should be eliminated as soon as you discover them, because the further they spread, the harder it is to stamp them out. Most viruses are small, often just a few hundred bytes. In spite of their size they can create a huge amount of damage.

But though viruses are small, they can be found out. Virus detectors and killers are clever programs that can recognise many viruses, sometimes well over a hundred, by detecting changes to the files on a disk or a bootblock, or by recognising the file structure and characteristics of individual viruses. Although some viruses are similar in what effects they have on a machine, the way they are programmed is different and virus detectors can look for strips of code to detect if a virus is present on a disk.

Because of the sheer quantity of viruses around it becomes increasingly difficult to detect different strains. Not only that, there are new viruses popping up all the time.

PD perspective

The nature of the way public domain software is distributed leaves these programs wide open to being attacked by viruses.

This is the case on three levels:

● If the programmer is of a devious nature then they may deliberately create an infected disk. In fact, it's not unknown for some programmers to create programs that purport to be something else, when, in fact, their main purpose is to spread viruses or destroy data. One example of this was an unofficial update of the popular Amiga virus utility, *Virus X*, which was hacked to spread a virus.

The open nature of public domain means that the source code to some programs is often included with the main program files. While this is helpful for people who want to learn how to program, it does mean that those with sufficient knowledge can turn a harmless program into something destructive.

"As virus detectors get more complex so do viruses – there's no stopping the people intent on causing the problem."

● The next level is the public domain libraries themselves. All it takes is for one disk to slip through their screening procedures and they might duplicate it and send out the virus to hundreds of customers. The vast majority of libraries are vigorous in checking their disks, but some viruses will inevitably go by unnoticed – virus writers don't write programs that are easy to detect.

● These two methods of distribution of PD software are negligible compared to the major way that these programs are spread: by the average computer user. Viruses can be spread easily when disks are copied, and the way public domain software invites itself to be copied opens it up to being infected.

Down the line

There has also been a lot of speculation about the dangers of downloading PD software from bulletin board systems (BBSs) and how doing so can infect

cont. on p74

A virus ate my hamster – behind the press hype

While viruses are dangerous and cannot be ignored, the situation hasn't been made any easier by the general media which seems intent on hyping the threat of viruses and the problems they pose for society in general.

A number of myths have evolved, making viruses sound more dangerous than they really are. Here we dispel some of these myths, to try and get to the nitty gritty of what viruses are really about:

● Despite what *The Sun* and the *Sunday Sport* might claim computer viruses can't infect humans, they can only destroy data

● Viruses can't be 'caught' just by logging on to a BBS – the only way viruses can be transmitted by BBSs is if they come as part of software that has been uploaded. Diligent users will always check their downloaded software for viruses before running it.

● There's a rumour that some viruses can copy themselves to the RAM in the Amiga's clock (the one that comes with the A501 RAM expansions on the A500, for example) but that's all it is: a rumour. The theory was that the virus would always be stored in this memory and could then copy itself to other disks, even after the machine had been turned off.

● Viruses can't copy themselves on to write-protected disks, in spite of the claims of some virus writers.

● Many viruses for the ST are not blitter compatible. If an ST equipped with a blitter chip is infected then a message like: 'your disk is write-protected' may appear, even if you're not trying to write to the disk.

Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strains

● ***Vacsina/Yankee Doodle/TP Series*** – This virus also has a number of variants, many of which play the tune 'Yankee Doodle Dandy' through the PC's internal speaker – horrible.

● ***AntiCAD*** – There is a family of these viruses, which are triggered when *ACAD.EXE* (the AUTOCAD program) is executed. They check the disk drives for the presence of a disk, and if they find one, they write random data on track 0 of the disks. Then an explosion routine starts, with speaker noise generated every 4.5 minutes.

● ***Armageddon*** – A virus from Greece which interferes with the serial port. It produced control strings for Hayes-compatible modems, dialling the number 081-141 which is the talking clock in Crete.

● ***Macho*** – Swaps every occurrence of the string 'Microsoft' on a hard disk with 'Machosoft'.

ST

The ST only has two main types of viruses: bootblock and link. Most of its viruses are the bootblock variety, and aren't as complex as some of the viruses around for the PC:

● ***Ghost/Mouse*** – This little guy copies itself 10 times and then flips the mouse's Y-axis which causes the mouse pointer to move in the opposite direction to which you move your mouse. Very irritating.

● ***Chopin*** – This copies itself to disks in drive A. After 26 copies it then plays Chopin's *Death* ➤

Why write a virus?

There are a number of reasons why someone would write a virus, not all of them necessarily evil. Some people, the real 'hackers' of the computer community (that is, those who want to know byte for byte how their computer works and not those who try to break the security of computers for the sake of it), just want to increase their knowledge of the machine and to see how such programs are written. They see writing viruses as being a crucial part of their understanding.

There are other people out there who are genuinely interested in causing chaos, and who do their darndest to program viruses with the sole purpose of being destructive. It's a shame that such programming talent – and to be able to get to the roots of a machine does require some advanced knowledge – has to be wasted on such destructive purposes.

Another aspect of programming viruses – this time a psychological one – is that some programmers crave notoriety and writing viruses is one way of achieving this.

cont. from p73

your computer with a virus. Software that is uploaded to BBSs – that is, software that is put up for other people to download and make their own copy of – *does* have the potential to spread viruses. Many files on BBSs are archived in order to turn a whole lot of files into a single, smaller one. When this happens viruses can be archived along with the other program files, often unwittingly.

This isn't always the case, but the large number of files uploaded by BBS users can make it difficult for the sysop to check each one to see if it is a rogue program or archive. The moral of the story is that if you use BBSs, always test the software that you download with a virus checker to see if it is infected or not. And if it is, do the right thing: tell the sysop so that they can remove the offending files from the board, and prevent other people's computers from becoming infected.

Viruses don't look as if they're going to go away. Just as virus detectors get more complex and comprehensive so do viruses – there's no stopping people who are intent on causing problems.

Despite their destructive properties viruses are quite ingenious programs, and, if you think about it from a different perspective, it's impressive that a program which does so much is contained in such a small space. It's a shame that the people who write them don't use their abilities more productively. PD

PD virus checkers

The only defence is offence

Virus checkers have to be regularly updated to keep track of new variations of viruses, and a whole sub-industry has been created in the software industry to try and cope with the epidemic. As a result, there are a number of commercial virus checkers around, but the job can be done just as effectively – and much more cheaply – by programs in the public domain.

Master Virus Killer 2.2

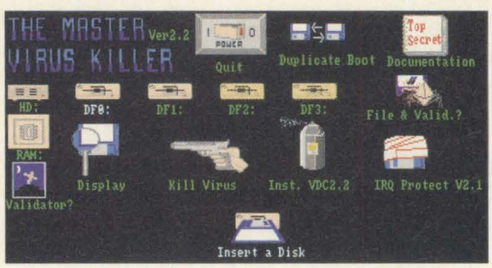
Amiga • AmigaNuts United, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton, SO1 6QX

Equipped with an easy-to-use front end and numerous features, *Master Virus Killer* is widely regarded as the best virus killer for the Amiga. Several different versions of this utility have been put in the public domain but the latest version (2.2) is not strictly PD — it is only available from AmigaNuts for £5.

Simple to use and well-presented, *Master Virus Killer* can hunt and kill 153 viruses. These include bootblock, link and disk-validator viruses which covers virtually all viruses for the Amiga.

As well as recognising dangerous bootblocks and infected files, the program can also recognise a selection of commercial and harmless bootblocks. This means that if you have these programs in your collection, *Master Virus Killer* will help prevent you from destroying their bootblocks. It can be easily installed on your hard drive to avoid lengthy set-up sequences.

Regularly updated it should be an essential inclusion in your virus-killing collection.



Possibly the best virus killer available for the Amiga, *Master Virus Killer 2.2* can check for and kill 153 different viruses

Complete Virus Toolkit

PC • Fantasia Shareware, PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716

This is a five-disk package of virus hunters, checkers and killers for the PC. The first disk is full of text and document files, some of which are relevant to the programs included on the other four disks. Others detail 'interesting' facts of the so-called computer underground, such as the influx of viruses and Trojans on US BBSs.

The other disks contain the program and utility files. In spite of the quantity of programs, none are particularly useful. They're all quite old which reduces their effectiveness, as they're unable to combat more recent strains of viruses.

Some of the programs have some merit, but there aren't enough of them to justify filling up five disks, even if they are inexpensive public domain.

Professional Virus Killer

ST • Disk 104 • Jennix PD, 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Kent ME2 3QB ☎ 0634 723659

This virus checker gets full marks for presentation, but for usefulness it fares poorly.

When it loads the program comes up with an elaborate intro which looks as if it has been ripped out of something like *Defender of the Crown*. Then, once it has loaded, it invites you to play a 'Doctorin' the Tardis' sample, which goes on for quite a while.

As far as the program's virus-hunting and killing capabilities are concerned, all it does is check bootblocks and gives a limited response to whatever it finds. Not recommended.

Virus Tracker

Amiga • U110 • NBS 132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5LH ☎ 0983 529594.

This is a compilation of programs which, instead of automatically hunting and killing viruses on disks, check the computer's memory

Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strains

➤ *March* repeatedly and freezes the ST. When the music reaches the end point it then displays a rude text message.

● ***Batman*** – Another bootblock virus, *Batman* copies itself infinitely by intercepting various operating functions to make it reset-proof. This means that you can only get rid of it by turning your machine off; a simple reset won't clear it. It can destroy large directories and also turns your mouse pointer into a *Batman* logo one hour after it has infected your machine.

● ***Cookie Monster*** – No doubt based on the famous *Sesame Street* character, this virus copies itself 30 times and then prints: 'You know what? I want a cookie!' Once the word 'cookie' is typed in the virus will let you continue using your machine, but each time it copies itself another 20 times the message will reappear.

● ***Uluru*** – This link virus attaches itself to programs and installs itself in memory once an infected program is executed. It then infects any other programs that are executed from then on, but only if they are run from drive A or B, and if they are larger than 10 kilobytes. After a certain length of time, it creates a text file on disk which contains the message: 'MAD Zimmerman will be watching you'.

● ***Virus Construction Set* Part 2** – This is another link virus which prints the message: 'You have 10 seconds to prevent a reset' before starting a count-down. At the end of the count-down it resets the ST. This virus comes in a

after an infected disk may have been used.

The reasoning behind this is that viruses spread by staying in memory after a reset, and the programs on the disk are meant to find, identify and subsequently kill these viruses.

The disk itself consists of a number of handy utilities which work together to prevent viral infection. These include *SID*, the essential file utility, *VectaCheck 1.5* and *Nuke*, which checks for and repairs damage done by the *Saddam* and similar viruses.

It is difficult to say just how effective they are, particularly when it comes to hunting down link viruses. The files may be in memory and while utilities such as *Nuke* might be able to kill them, for overall ease of use a program such as *Master Virus Killer* is more effective and easier to use.

Sagrotan

ST • Atari ST User Group • Norway PD Library c/o SA Jensen, N-3630 Rodberg, Norway

Sagrotan can not only search and destroy boot sector and link types of viruses, it also has a number of other useful features.

It can save bootblocks which is handy if, say, a commercial game has been infected by a virus and has had its bootblock destroyed – if the bootblock has been saved by *Sagrotan* it can be replaced. *Sagrotan* also keeps track of the length of files. This is a straightforward way of detecting whether the length of a file has been extended by a link virus.

Apart from these handy features, *Sagrotan* is a capable virus killer which can detect and kill a large selection of ST viruses. Though a bit complex to use, it is an effective tool and useful for people who have a lot of commercial software that is prone to infection as well as more regular virus prevention.

Super Virus Killer 1.0

ST • Disk 106 • Jennix PD
66 Abbey Road, Strood, Kent ME2 3QB
☎ 0634 723659.

A rather archaic virus utility, *Super Virus Killer* dates back to 1989. It remains quite a capable program, although it only caters for bootblock viruses.

The program can examine, display and save bootblocks — the save option is useful for keeping a database of the boot sectors from commercial programs. Apart from these virus killing options, *Super Virus Killer* gives you an option to protect your disks with a variety of safe custom bootblocks. It can also inform you of how your system is set-up and how much disk space your machine has.

Protect yourself – the virus busters' Top 10

1 Be wary of any software that you borrow, and avoid pirated software like the plague. It's not only dangerous, it's illegal.

2 Turn off your machine for at least 30 seconds each time you want to use a different program. This won't get rid of viruses if they have infected a disk but it will prevent them from spreading to other disks.

3 Get hold of a virus checker and regularly scan all your software for viruses.

4 Always write protect your disks. On 3.5-inch disks this is done by moving the notch in the top right hand corner of the disk so that you can see a whole through it. And on 5.25-inch disks, place a write protect sticker across the indented notch at the side of the disk (or sides if you use double-sided disks).

5 Make regular back-up copies of your most important data. This includes backing up your hard drive.

6 Don't use original disks. Always make a working copy of the programs you use, if possible. (But remember, it is illegal to back-up some commercial software, such as games.)

7 If you have a hard disk that can switched off, do so when using auto-booting disks.

8 When copying to a hard drive, don't put the program in your main directory. That way if your machine does become infected by a virus, then hopefully it will only infect the directory it is in and not your entire hard disk.

9 Be careful when you do kill viruses, particularly bootblock-based ones, because you could accidentally destroy important data needed by the program on the disk.

10 If you do discover that you've got a virus:

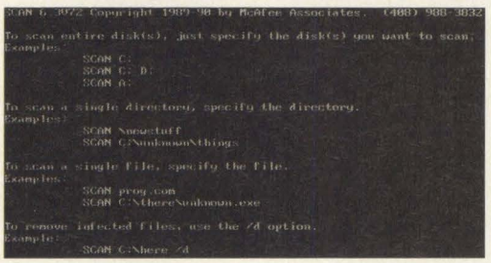
- Stop what you're doing.
- Turn your machine off.
- Try and remember which software you used before the virus struck.
- Use a virus killer to check software you have used, over and above your normal virus checks.

Scan/Clean

PC • Fantasia Shareware
PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol
☎ 0761 453716

This is one of the more professional virus tools on the PC.

It can hunt and kill the majority of PC viruses and is updated on a regular basis. There are several versions of *Scan* in the public domain, some of which date back as far as 1989. The program is run from the command line and, as its name suggests, scans floppy and hard disks for viruses. It's easy to use; just type SCAN and then the letter of the drive you want to check.


SCAN C 3072 Copyright 1989-90 by McAfee Associates (408) 988-3832
To scan entire disk(s), just specify the disk(s) you want to scan.
Examples:
SCAN C:
SCAN C: D:
SCAN A:
To scan a single directory, specify the directory.
Examples:
SCAN \mousestuff
SCAN C:\unknown\things
To scan a single file, specify the file.
Examples:
SCAN prog.com
SCAN C:\there\unknown.exe
To remove infected files, use the /d option.
Example:
SCAN C:\here /d

Not all that exciting to look at, *Scan* is nevertheless an effective virus hunter and is regularly updated

Scan is partnered with *Clean*. If *Scan* finds a virus then *Clean* can be used to destroy it. They work together effectively and while not overly attractive to look at, their functionality and the fact they're regularly updated makes them worthwhile.

BootX

Amiga • V391 • PD Soft,
1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD ☎ 0702 612259

BootX is a new, advanced virus checker capable of seeking and killing a wide range of viruses. It comes as part of a compilation called *The New Superkillers* which is packed with useful virus - related items. In use the program worked fine on a standard Amiga 500 equipped with *Kickstart 1.3* but it wouldn't run under *Kickstart 2.0* (as found in the new Amiga 500 Plus and Amiga 3000), in spite of what the program claimed to the contrary. Apart from that, there's not much to criticise. It can hunt and kill a wide range of viruses, and looks good at the same time.

Canary

PC • Advantage
56 Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7HJ
☎ 0242 224340

Canary is effectively an alarm program that detects changes to EXE, DAT and COMMAND.COM files. It does this by checking itself, its document file and the COMMAND.COM file for changes in length or content, and by keeping track of when files have been changed on the disk. It can't kill the viruses that it finds — you'll have to get another program to do that — but it could be a useful additional security method.

Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strains • Major strains

number of variations as it was available as part of a commercial virus-creating package.

AMIGA

Like the ST, the Amiga only has two main types of viruses: the bootblock and link variety. In comparison to the ST and PC, though, you could call Amiga viruses boring – there isn't as much variety or humour as on the other two machines:

- ***SCA*** – Probably the first on the Amiga. It was written by the Swiss Cracking Association – a pirate group – what it does is copy itself, but occasionally prints the meassage: 'Something wonderful has happened. Your Amiga is alive.' Pretty boring, but it was one of the first widespread viruses on the Amiga.
- ***Lamer Exterminator*** – This virus comes in several variations, the most dangerous of which destroys the disk-validator on disks, rendering them useless. Other than that strain, the *Lamer Exterminator* just copies itself.
- ***BS9*** – One of the first link viruses, this one writes a blank file to the L directory and links itself to one of the files in the C directory. Not too dangerous; it just prints a text message on-screen and can be killed by most virus killers.
- ***Saddam*** – No prizes for guessing who this nasty virus is named after. This is probably the most dangerous of all the Amiga's viruses, as it infects all the files on a disk, writing the letters IRAK (sic) to the start of each file, making them all come up with read/write errors.

Demos

You've got all the games and utilities that you need, so what do you do for a little light entertainment? To really show off the power of your machine you need to get hold of some PD Demos. Maff Evans sorts out the real stunners from the duffers...

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Crystal Symphonies

Amiga • 1951 • PD Soft
1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 466933

What atmosphere does the name *Crystal Symphonies* evoke? An ethereal feeling enhanced by sparkling chords washing over the listener? A Cocteau Twins-style jangle which conjures up visions of another land? Maybe a classical masterpiece capturing the feel of spring and fresh rain? Well the demo doesn't contain any of these elements.

What you get is a pretty bog-standard music collection, consisting of tunes by members of various groups (and not their best works either).

A couple of the tracks are worth a mention, such as *Denial*, which starts off quite funky but begins to flounder in the usual PD wibble after a while. Other worthy attempts are the swing-influenced *Jazzy Nork* and *La Vie est Rose*, which, believe it or not, is a calypso song!

The demo attempts to be a bit flashy by displaying fireworks in time with the music along with user-selected bouncing ball patterns and scrolling messages. The thing is that it's all been seen before and the music doesn't stand up enough to make the demo very interesting. Now, if you got some decent tunes, it might be a different matter entirely.

AMIGA 46%

Yes, it's that good old demo fall-back – bouncing balls, here trying to disguise some rather dull tunes

ULM Mega Demo

ST • DEM G40 • Riverdene
30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN

I'm not too sure what to make of the intro to this disk. On the one hand it contains a multi-colour, full-screen, no border, bouncing scroll, but on the other it contains some of the weediest, scratchiest sampled music I've ever heard! Maybe inspiration ran out somewhere along the way...

The rest of the disk takes on a pretty strange form. To choose which demo you want to see you have to play an odd little platform game. You have to fly a winged lion around a somewhat psychedelic landscape, going through doors to enter the various sub-sections.

Although the disk features this pretty neat selection system, the majority of the demos are unoriginal, consisting of simple scrollers and bleepy tunes. Still, there's a lot on there, so it should keep manic collectors happy for... ooh, about 20 minutes.

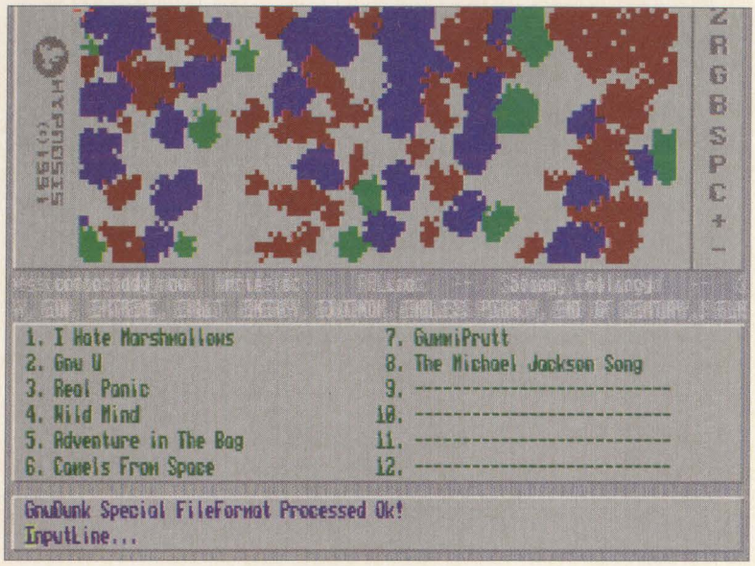
ST 53%

Gnudunk Music Demo

Amiga • 1304 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

This is a brave attempt at trying something different. As well as displaying a menu with the tunes available, this disk also includes a life-culture simulator.

Unfortunately, the life-sim doesn't work too well (not to mention it being as dull as watching an Arsenal match)



***Gnudunk Music Demo*: what the hell is all that blobby stuff at the top of the screen? Well, apparently it's a life simulation, but it doesn't remind me much of my life**

and all the tunes included on the disk are universally turgid.

If you're going to market a demo as a music disk, you really should get some decent tunes together before you start!

AMIGA **32%**

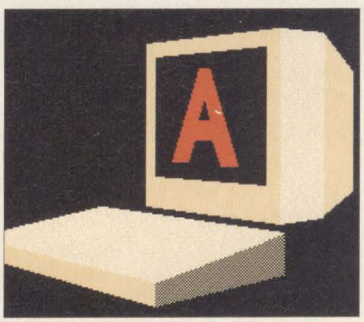
Digital Innovation

Amiga • D708 • NBS
132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle Of Wight PO30 5LH
☎ 0983 529594

Coding group Anarchy makes another appearance on the demo scene with its very own disk.

Digital Innovation starts off with a superb intro pic, featuring some figures drawn in an excellent metallic effect, but the rest of the disk doesn't match up to the class of this piccy. The disk is another exercise in 'typical demo construction', being mostly made up of dull scrollers and bland music. Some of the vector shapes are quite unusual though, and could be worth a look by die-hard polygon fans.

AMIGA **67%**



Anarchy's *Digital Innovation* could do with a bit more originality to match up to its name!

The Prelude Demo

ST • Riverdene
30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN

To really show off the power of your machine, you have to put together stirring music, impressive graphics and slick coding. Clever coding in itself may be all very well, but it's invisible to the person watching unless they're a coder themselves.

Mega 4's *Prelude Demo* is one disk that suffers from this drawback. There's no doubt that a lot of work has been put into the technical side of the demos included, but the problem is that they're all boring.

All the disk contains is a series of wobbly scrolls consisting of fairly standard PD fonts with some sub-standard backing tunes. If Mega 4 are reading this – try making them a bit more entertaining next time, guys!

ST **33%**

The Voyage

Amiga • 1952 • PD Soft
1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 466933

Imagine the scene: you're whizzed off to a strange and mystical place, where you fly from one celestial wonder to the next. Unfortunately, *The Voyage* isn't quite this intriguing.

The demo consists of a 3D flight around a flat, green surface dotted by a few trees. Occasionally you reach a monitor showing the usual PD demo fare of vector shapes and pictures. This would be alright if the pictures were exciting and the vectors were interesting, but the only feeling they evoke is a strong sense of déjà vu, since they're about the same as a lot of other demos.

Good idea, shame about the images!

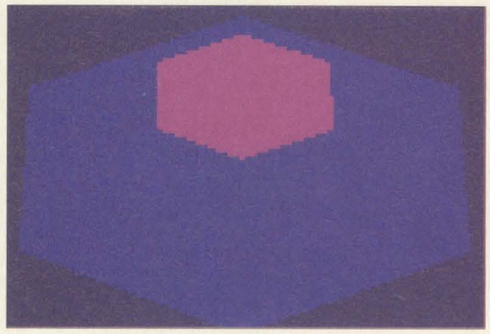
AMIGA **48%**

KLF – 3am Eternal

Amiga • 1867 • PD Soft
1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 466933

Along with the Shamen the KLF are turning out to be one of the most

cont. on p78



***The Voyage* demo isn't quite as thrilling as a trip around the world, but what do you expect for a quid?**

Biscuit-brandishing aliens and robotic revenge...

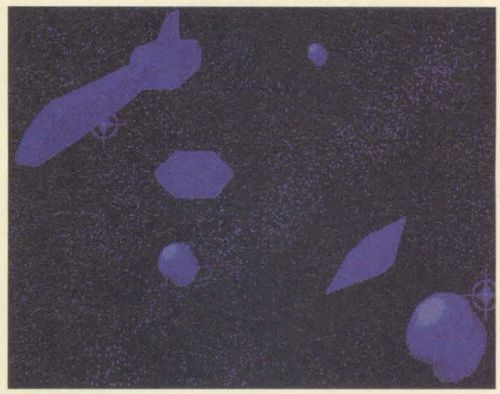
Simple Stuff Volume 13

Amiga • D702 • NBS
132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle Of Wight PO30 5LH
☎ 0983 529594

The trouble with demo compilations is that the stuff on the disk is generally pretty weak. Occasionally, however, there is one demo which makes the rest of the disk worth a look.

Simple Stuff Volume 13 consists mainly of pretty weedy efforts, including (the rather old) *ED-209 – The Revenge*. This involves you walking a killer robot down a horizontally scrolling street using the joystick, blasting anything you meet (which includes stray dogs and Mutant Turtles). Technically speaking, the demo is lame, and the attempt at humour falls flatter than a concrete pancake. Other weedy efforts include the *Tronix* demo, which is yet another cobbled-together bunch of scrolls, colour-cycle effects and fractal images, and an intro by Anthrax, which simply displays a few uninteresting vector shapes.

Where the disk gets interesting is the *Jehova Goes Hitech* demo. This tells a strange story of an oppressive race flying around the galaxy subduing their victims by force-feeding them biscuits. The plot is illustrated by way of a series of text messages, pictures and vector animations, forming a nice little demo which hangs together pretty well (why can't more people make better use of vectors like this?) and this makes the disk well worth a look.



Follow the tale of a galactic chase and the battle against biscuits (eh?) in the *Jehova Goes Hitech* demo on NBS' *Simple Stuff 13*

AMIGA **78%**

cont. from p77

popular sources of inspiration for music demo makers.

Things start to look a little dodgy with this demo even before the disk is in the drive, owing to the fact that the label boasts that it is the *KLF 3am External* demo! So, it was recorded outside, was it?

Unfortunately, this lack of care and attention continues when you actually boot the disk. The demo itself is pretty dull, with an incredibly bland screen to back-up the music.

However, this is beside the point, since the music should be strong enough without any visuals. But guess what, the track is just a few badly-edited snippets of the track stuck together in roughly the same order as the original.

Maybe with a little more care, a more interesting rendition could have been achieved, but there you go.

***3am Eternal*: a pretty dodgy screen to go with a music demo, but then again the music should stand up in its own right. It doesn't**

AMIGA 36%

The Total Vision Inc Mega Demo

ST • CH136/D • Captain Hack's 19 Latimer Drive, Laindown, Essex SS15 4RD
☎ 0268 416888

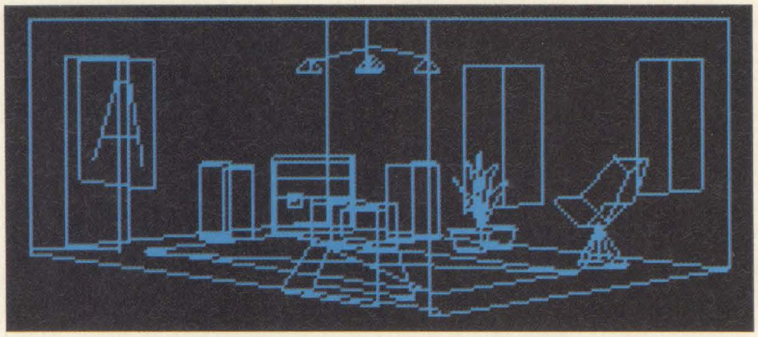
Total Vision Inc's latest offering gets off to a pretty good start with a doomy, powerful intro track backing up a nicely-drawn logo. "This bodes well for the rest of the disk," is the phrase that comes to mind, but from then on the originality tends to wither.

The second demo features the music from the original *Speedball* along with the leg-tapping intro graphics to the game. Wow, guys! It must have taken you ages to work that out!

The rest of the disk gets progressively less interesting, with a series of duff scrollers and dodgy backing tunes. The last demo, by Oxygene of the Lost Boys, is the only thing that redeems the disk from being consigned to the blanks-box.

The graphics are of the usual boring scrolly-text variety so beloved of demo writers, but the backing tune is pretty stonking, so music freaks or fans of the Lost Boys may find this... well fairly interesting anyway.

ST 46%



A nice, high-tech house courtesy of the *Boxer* demo. Those gaps could be a bit nippy what with the winter coming on. And it's not too good if you've got nosey neighbours, either

Boxer

Amiga • 1257 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

After a decidedly shaky start, *Boxer* gets into the swing of things by displaying a rotating picture of a wireframe room. Unfortunately, this is about as good as it gets!

The rest of the demo is taken up by a repetitive tune and some very uninteresting Mandelbrot pictures. Not very original, is it?

AMIGA 49%

The Asylum Retina Burn

ST • DEM 316 • MPH
10 Chandlers Court, Eaton, Norwich NR4 6EX

With a name like *Retina Burn*, you'd expect to find some pretty psychedelic colours whizzing about at great speeds to produce that 'eeeurgh!' response. But no such luck.

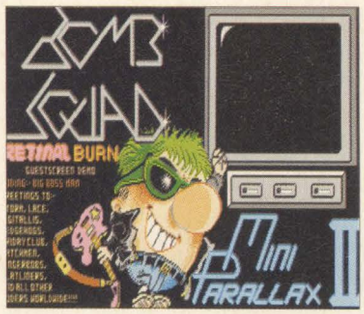
This disk doesn't really contain anything even remotely stunning in the visuals department, consisting of some fairly bland logos and vectors. There is a pretty good vector-balls demo, which allows you to move the objects around yourself, and the 3D graphics on the STOS music demo are pretty good – even if the music is quite appalling.

The *Tiny Parallax* demo is the worst of the bunch. All that it comprises is a static picture with a scrolling starfield in the top right hand corner of the screen. But does it make up for the lack of visuals with a decent soundtrack? No. There is a short, scratchy and ultimately irritating loop from the Shamen's *Progen*, but that's about it.

The whole thing seems to have been put together in a shoddy way, with loose ends cropping up all over the place. The way the demos are loaded is pretty grim, with the machine resetting, loading the menu, then loading the next demo. This makes viewing the (rather dull) sections slow and tedious.

Avoid at all costs!

ST 29%



***Asylum Retina Burn*: believe it or not, this is a parallax scroll demo. So where is it? That square in the corner? What a con!**

Another variation on scrolly text and one good joke

Syntax Terror Demo

ST • CH 082/D • Captain Hack's 19 Latimer Drive, Laindown, Essex SS15 4RD
☎ 0268 416888

Just when you think that all the permutations of scrolly-text demos have been pretty much covered, along comes another one to annoy us. The *Snurkel Twister* section of this disk is your basic scrolling demo, except the letters rotate and twist as they cross the screen. Well that's stunningly interesting.

There are a couple of nice points though. The *Colourshock* demo features some nice colour-plasma effects, and the whole thing has been put together with a sense of humour. An example of this is the *Big Border* demo. This consists of a small scrolling screen and... a big border! Not very impressive technically speaking, but a good joke.

***Syntax Terror Demo*: let's twist again, like on this strange demo. On second thoughts... you could end up in hospital**

ST 68%

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* = 1Mb Needed

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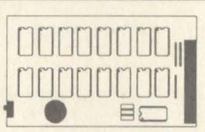

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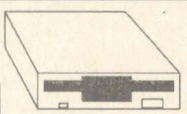

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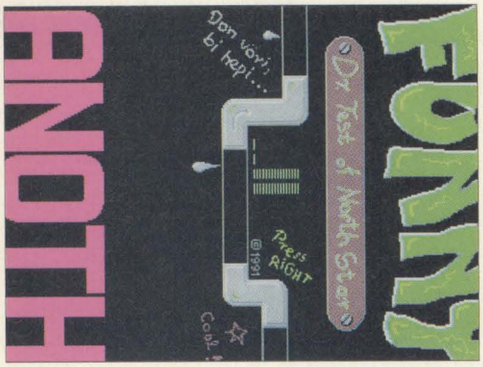
cont. from p78



***Intros Compilation 62:* about the best thing you can say about most of the demos on this compilation is that they're short**

Intros Compilation 62

Amiga • 1368 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield
WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

Readers of the last issue of *Public Domain* will no doubt have seen the review of volume 62 of 17-Bit's compilation disks. This month, the library has brought us another one, with a collection of short demos and intros to boost your collection.

The problem is that none of these demos are particularly worth having! Demo 1 is made up of boring vectordots and scrollers backed up by a dull tune and Demo 2 (imaginative names these) consists of more scrolls and dreadful music with an attempt at a plasma effect which doesn't quite come off.

Demo 3 attempts to make up for lack of technique by turning itself into a joke. The message from the CPU at the start of the demo is OK, but as an overall jab at humour it's sadly lacking. *Demo 4* is yet another failed plasma effort, while *Demo 5* doesn't seem to do anything at all.

The four intros (five if you count the one that doesn't work) are extremely weak, and sticking them all on one disk doesn't improve their value to any extent. You're still better off getting hold of a disk with one good demo. This disk proves that quantity isn't better than quality.

AMIGA **30%**

This is about as exciting as the *STOS Tracker* demo gets. If only the music made up for it, but no. That's pretty dire too

The Skunk's STOS Tracker Demo

ST • LAN 861 • Riverdene PDL
30a School Road, Tilehurst,
Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN
☎ 0734 452416

Well, what can you say about this? All that it's got is a collection of duff tunes and very little in the way of graphics. Anything else? No, not really. Boring in the extreme.

ST **20%**

Transbeauce Demo II

ST • DEM 950 • Riverdene PDL
30a School Road, Tilehurst,
Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN
☎ 0734 452416

Anyone who's been watching the PD Demo scene for some time will no doubt have seen the first *Transbeauce Demo*. The sequel is of a similarly high standard.

The loading pictures are nicely drawn, including an evil-looking magician and a 2000-AD style soldier.

The *Art of Code* demo is particularly interesting. It's no technical masterpiece, but it contains an element sadly lacking in many demos – particularly on the ST – and that's entertainment. It starts off with a rather sketchy drawing of a monitor, a mixing desk and a speaker. When the music kicks in, the speaker starts pulsing and the little characters on the monitor start to thrash away at their instruments. A simple idea, but it works extremely well.

ST **81%**

Don't mess with this fellow! He might just... er... load another part of the *Transbeauce II* demo at you or something

ST 81%

Silents France Demo

Amiga • 1947 • PD Soft
1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 466933

Coders Silents France have a pretty good reputation as far as PD demos are concerned. Their tricks and techniques are often imitated by other coders trying to capture that polished, professional look.

Their latest demo features some nice coding and artwork, especially the pretty card logo and chessboard effect on the intro, but things start to go

Pick a card. Any card. The three of clubs? Wrong! Damn! You should have checked out the *Silents France Demo* first!

Blasts from the past – jazz, disco and children's TV

Bruno's Box 3

Amiga • 1376 and 1377 • 17-Bit, PO Box 97, Wakefield, WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982

This is a very strange demo indeed! To begin with it resurrects an ancient children's TV character *Doctor Snuggles* to begin the intro, then switches to a rather odd little music disk.

The selection screen is taken up by 30s-style logos, complete with a cartoon picture of a clock face. The tunes are selected by moving the big hand of the clock with the joystick, then pressing the button to call up your desired tune.

The tracks range from 30s-style rag-time music to 70s disco and folk. A strange combination which may strike a chord with a few people!

AMIGA **66%**

What a blast from the past this is! *Doctor Snuggles* (anyone remember him?) bounces along to introduce *Bruno's Box 3*

The sultry, pouting songstress, Wendy James. But why has she got her gob open on all these pictures?

wrong after a while. The musical backing starts well, adding a dark atmosphere to the proceedings, but it soon turns into the normal PD demo drivel, and the images descend into the everyday, run of the mill vector demos that are becoming so tedious these days.

Ah well, better luck next time.

AMIGA 46%

Wendy James Slideshow

Amiga • 1360 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

Fan worship is a powerful thing. Some people will get hold of anything and everything to do with their favourite stars. They'll buy all the records, read all the interviews, stick up all the posters and put together dodgy PD slideshows.

This slideshow presents the viewer with a series of somewhat blurred grabs of Transvision Vamp singer Wendy James, all taken from the band's various videos. The artist has attempted to make up for the lack of clarity in the pictures by placing a coloured tint over the screens, but this doesn't really improve things.

The repetitive, looped sample track gets a little tedious after a while, urging your hand towards the volume control.

One for the diehard Vamp fans only, but then that's who it's aimed at, I suppose.

AMIGA 47%

TWM Module Disk 11

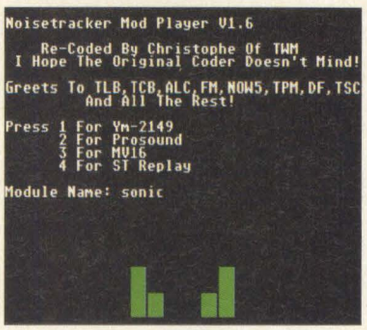
ST • DEM 948 • Riverdene PDL
30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN
☎ 0734 452416

Managing to combine clear sound with powerful tunes on ST music demos isn't the easiest thing in the world, but TWM has managed pretty well on its eleventh *Music Module* compilation. The sampled effects aren't the best ever heard, but they've been used extremely efficiently to produce a collection of tunes which stand up in their own right.

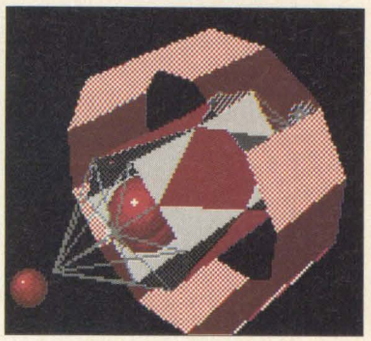
Nebulos is the most impressive, presenting a doomy, Jean Michel Jarre-style tune which sounds very much like a section of a film soundtrack. Another track worthy of a mention is the up-beat *Sonic*, which combines dance rhythms with an ethereal Arabic feel. Very new-age!

If that weren't enough, there's also the theme to *Turrican II*... but doesn't every music compilation feature a version these days?

ST 79%


Noisetracker Mod Player V1.6
Re-Coded By Christophe Of TWM
I Hope The Original Coder Doesn't Mind!
Greets To TLB,TCB,ALC,FM,NOW5,TPM,DF,TSC
And All The Rest!
Press 1 For Ym-2149
2 For Prosound
3 For MV16
4 For ST Replay
Module Name: sonic

There's not much in the way of visuals, but don't judge a demo by its graphics. The *TWM Module Disk* packs a couple of mean tunes



More vectors make an appearance on Devils' *No Reality* demo. Very original!

No Reality

Amiga • D713 • NBS
132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle Of Wight PO30 5LH
☎ 0983 529594

The Devils coding group is a relative newcomer to Amiga PD, having only a handful of outings to its credit. *No Reality* gets off to a decent enough start by employing a strange 3D plasma effect to back up the text screens between demos.

Unfortunately, this originality doesn't spread across to the demos themselves. All that you're given is the usual collection of vector shapes and dull music. What a waste of talent.

AMIGA 39%

cont. on p82

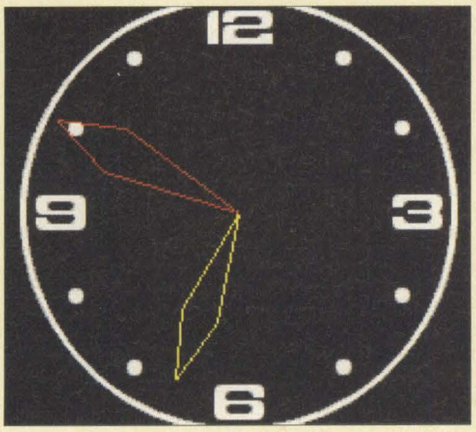
3D landscapes, care bear massacres, jiving clocks... phew, this demo is HOT!

Ooh Crikey, What a Scorcher!

ST • DEM 949 • Riverdene PDL
30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN
☎ 0734 452416

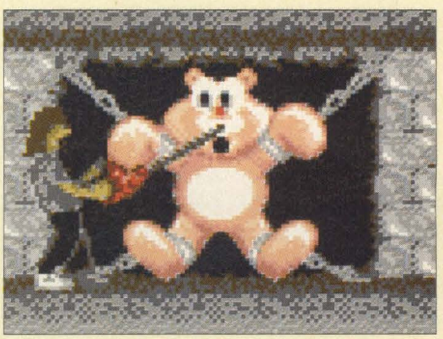
The Lost Boys make yet another appearance on the demo scene with their oddly-named *Ooh Crikey, What a Scorcher*. On booting the demo, a pretty, colourful picture of an island paradise appears, complete with lounging beach bums. This is followed with a stirring dance track featuring some powerful drums courtesy of (obscure, industrial) Belgian band Front 242's *Headhunter* single.

The method of selecting which demos you want to watch is just about the most impressive I've seen. To reach the required section, you must fly a spaceship down a fractal-based 3D valley, dodging mountains, walls and towers along the way, until you reach a landing pad. Touch down on the pad and the next demo is loaded, each bringing up a very nicely drawn picture before the demo starts.



"Say kids, what time is it?" Get those feet going to the groove in the Zonk section of *Ooh Crikey, What a Scorcher*

Some of the sections are the standard demo fare, with the old scrolly text and twiddly music, but there are a few notable exceptions. The rather gruesome chainsaw attack on a Care Bear is pretty horrific, but amusing in a perverse kind of way. The *Zonk!* *Acid Demo* is particularly impressive. A frantic filter-frenzy track plays while pulsating shapes, jumping clock-faces, manic grins and rippling waveforms flash across the screen. Fans of acid videos will find it most satisfying.

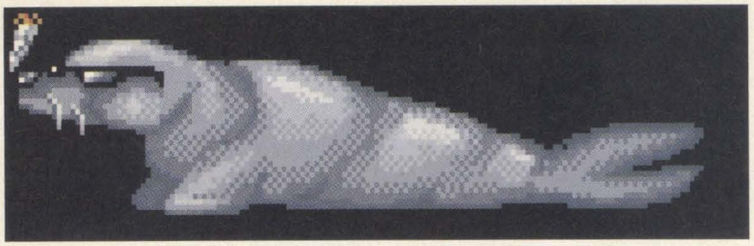


Oh no! The Lost Boys and Care Bears in chainsaw splatter horror! I can't 'bear' to look (groan)

Now this is the kind of thing we should be seeing more often in demos. There's obviously a lot of complex coding going on, but the demos also manage to cram humour, interesting images and entertainment in there, making the disk a must.

ST 90%

cont. from p81



What a clever seal! Smoking that wicked-looking roll-up could make him ill though! Get *Metal Mellisa* to see what happens next... (except those of a nervous disposition)

Metal Mellissa

Amiga • 1929 • PD Soft
~~Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD~~
☎ 0702 466933

With a name like Animators, you'd expect this coding team to come up with some pretty wild cartoon and animation clips to entertain the viewer. Unfortunately this isn't the case.

The desert animation on the intro, complete with rising sun, is rather good, but things start getting boring soon into the demo. The follow-up to this dawn scene is a simple rotating logo backed up by a surreal tune, but even the music tapers off somewhat after a few seconds.

The only thing on the disk worth looking at is the seal animation. This features a performing animal walking across the screen with a cigarette balanced on his nose. After a few seconds he takes a large drag and... ugh! He throws up on the floor. There could be a lesson in there.

AMIGA 41%

Inspector Gadget Demo

ST • CH055/D • Captain Hack's
19 Latimer Drive, Laindown,
~~Essex SS15 4RD~~
☎ 0268 416888

Have a guess what's involved in this one. Go on. You'll never work it out. Gosh! That's right! A picture of Inspector Gadget and a short rendition of the TV theme tune.

Well... that must have taken some hefty coding. Look out while I'm with

ST 32%

"Doo-dle-oodle-ooh, Inspector Ga-a-adget!" Come on, you know the words, sing along with the demo!

Fish'n'Chips

ST • CH110 • Captain Hack's
19 Latimer Drive, Laindown,
Essex SS15 4RD
☎ 0268 416888

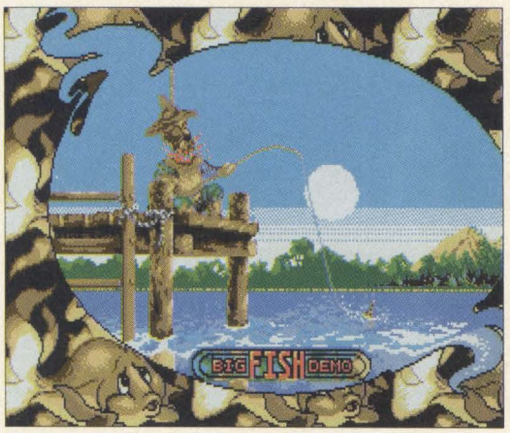
After a few fairly uninteresting false starts, this demo collection eventually gets underway with a well-drawn intro picture featuring a gnome-like character fishing on a jetty. Selecting one of the demos causes something rather unpleasant to happen to him, such as being hung, dragged off the top of the screen by a hook or even blown up.

Despite this nattily produce menu system, the rest of the disk is pretty bog standard. The *Big Fish* demo consists of a warbling tune and a couple of pictures of the old Colonel fish from *Monty Python*, while the *Crystal Scroll* demo is a simple scrolling message backed up by a rather fuzzy sample of the Art of Noise's *Moments in Love*.

Other snippets featured on the disk include a rather amusing sequence featuring some singing dinosaurs (honestly) and a somewhat dull acid demo.

The final section is a collection of reworkings of Commodore 64 tunes. Believe it or not, the ST versions are even thinner and weedier than the C64 versions, which hardly makes them essential listening. Ah well, there's still the dinosaurs...

ST 62%



Ugh! Looks like this bloke has lost his head. Not normally what happens when you go out and try to catch some *Fish 'n' Chips*

When is a CD player not a CD player? When it's a demo

CD Player Demo

Amiga • 1357 • 17-Bit
17 Brieley Close, Howden, N Humberside DN14 7JB
☎ 0430 432010

A lot of music demos have flashy graphic effects whizzing away in time with the music, but this one gets straight down to it with a rather obvious interface – a CD player. All the options (such as selecting which tracks to play, what order to play them, cueing and reviewing tracks and skipping songs) are all available at the touch of a button, with panels being called up corresponding to the relevant functions.

The tracks themselves vary widely in quality, from the rather weak version of Harold Faltermeyer's *Fletch* theme to a pretty impressive rendition of Jean Michel Jarre's *Zoolook*.

One thing that really lets the disk down is the inclusion of Vanilla Ice's *Ice Ice Baby*. Aaaaargh! Get it away from me now!

It's a shame really, since the talent used to produce this highly accurate version could have been used on a decent record. If you can avoid this dreadful track, then this demo is well worth a look.

What better display for a music demo than a set of CD Controls? That's what the *CD Player Demo* is all about

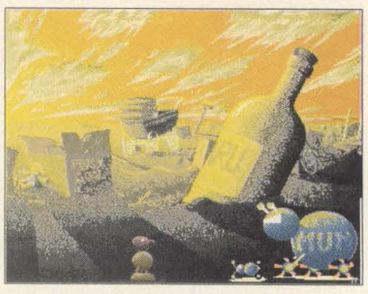
AMIGA 79%

Toons – Little Story II

Amiga • 1374 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

With the power of computers at your beck and call, it's worth letting your imagination run wild when creating animation demos, and that's exactly what the producers of the *Toons* series have done.

On this, the *Toons'* second outing, a strange blobby creature (don't ask what he's supposed to be – I have no



Oops! Perhaps that Toon shouldn't have done that! He slipped honest! Watch this tale of retribution unfold on the *Toons* demo

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VISA

cont. from p82

idea) bullies a poor, defenceless little robot. What he doesn't realise is that Mum is waiting around the corner! Oh dear – better make a run for it!

The animation style is a little odd, and the clip is a little short, but the imagination involved makes it worth investigating. It also bodes well for future *Toons* releases.

AMIGA 81%

Galtan Six Demo

ST • DEMO111 • Solent Software
53 Rufus Gardens, Totton,
~~Hants SO4 3TA ☎ 0703 868882~~

These 'game menus' seem to be all the rage these days. The one featured on this disk is a version of Battle Squadron, with the demos being selected by flying into the hangars found along the way.

This is the last face you want to see on a deserted plain. Good job it's only the *Galtan Six* demo – you can switch him off!

***3D Stereo Sound* may be impressive, but the visuals are hardly inspiring, are they?**

Unfortunately the demos themselves are pretty bland, consisting of dull scrolls and uninteresting backing tracks. The Megadeath-style monster animations are interesting for a minute or two, but this won't stop the disk from being consigned to the back of the disk box.

ST 30%

3D Stereo Sound Demo

ST • STE PD 290 • Jennix PD
66 Abbey Road, Strood,
~~Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB~~

Wow! 3D stereo! This should be impressive. Right... boot the disk... wait... listen to the sound and... oh. It's a bit boring, isn't it?

The stereo effect works well enough, but the music itself is appalling. The music is a sample of the Tomorrow's World theme – and a bad sample at that. It glitches, clicks and jumps in the most unexpected places, making the whole idea of a sound demo fall flat on its face. Next time, why not make the sample as impressive as the stereo, OK?

ST 30%

Stupendous Demo

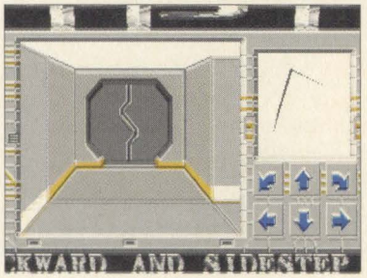
ST • State 808 PDL
3a Old Lanark Road, Carluke,
~~Scotland ML8 4HW~~

Here we go again! Another game-style menu system! This one is a Xenomorph-type walk around some corridors, with a series of airlocks dotted around the place to select the demos. This is all very well, but you need a map to find all the demos!

The sections themselves are run-of-the-mill, with some dull polygons, boring animated dots and some bouncing jellybean sprites. There is a pretty swish *Defender*-style game which is worth a bash, but the rest aren't anything to shout about.

Another weird thing is the appearance of an *R-type III* logo. The question is – why?

ST 48%



A 3D hunt around some futuristic corridors – and this is just the way that you load the sections of the *Stupendous Demo*!

ATF Agility

Amiga • H660 • NBS
132 Gunville Road, Newport,
Isle Of Wight PO30 5LH
~~☎ 0983 529594~~

No round up of current PD would be complete without an entry from Eric Schwartz! This time he adds to his already extensive *Aerotoons* series with a cautionary tale of a young jet fighter who thinks he's better than the old and wise bomber that lumbers across the sky. He darts, he twists and he pokes fun at the aged plane, but the old chap has a little trick up his sleeve to keep the young upstart in his place. A quick clip around the ear will soon sort him out!

As ever, Eric has come up with a winner. The style is smooth, polished and impressive, the artwork is bright and clear, the sound is jolly and effective and the story itself is witty and amusing. If you're an avid collector of the *Aerotoons* series, then get this one

Two demos, one track – this is what sampled music should really be about

The Shamen – Move Any Mountain

Amiga • 1399 and 1400 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1
1XX ☎ 0924 366982

Isn't it funny how PD demo coders quickly latch on to the latest chart hits? This demo takes an unusual twist in that it is a complete sample of the original version of *Progen* – the one that was released in 1990.

The picture that accompanies the demo is a bit feeble, but the sample quality is extremely good. You can even use the mouse buttons to speed up or slow down the sample (although why you'd want to do this, I've no idea).

Unfortunately, to hear the whole track you need two drives, but if you have a single drive system you can still hear the first half of the demo – which is better than nothing!

AMIGA 82%

This two-disk demo may be weak on visuals, but it contains the full original version of the Shamen's *Progen*. But who's this bloke?

Progen – Move Any Mountain

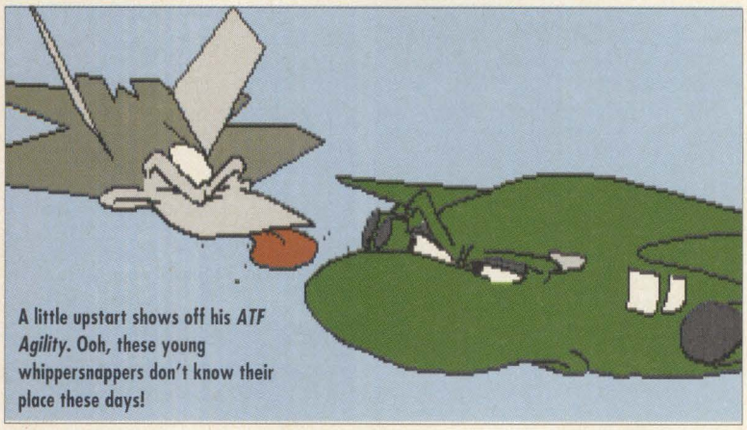
Amiga • 1380 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1
1XX ☎ 0924 366982

After the success of the various versions of the *Progen* single, One Little Indian records released a CD containing all the mixes of the track so far. At the end of the disk was a selection of samples, vocal breaks and beats used in the tracks to enable you to produce your own mixes, and Zeff of the Four Small Custards coding team has been quick off the mark in releasing a version into the PD circuit.

The track on this demo has been constructed using Amiga samples taken from the CD to produce a rather good reworking of the record. Well, the tools have been provided – why not use them?

AMIGA 82%

A good reworking of the Shamen logos is used to back up this alternative remixed version of *Progen – Move Any Mountain*



A little upstart shows off his *ATF Agility*. Ooh, these young whippersnappers don't know their place these days!

immediately. If, on the other hand, you've never seen one, this is as good a place as any to start, so you should get it immediately as well!

AMIGA 90%

chance to sample the delights of the series, this disk is an absolute must. It'll take it's place in demo history.

Right, bring on the real fun...

AMIGA 90%

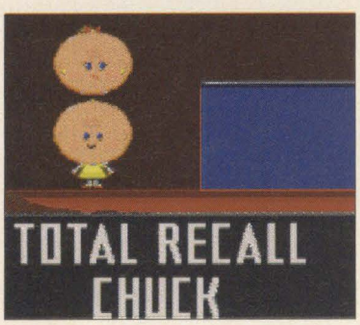
Yet More Classy Animations Volume Five (PD)

Amiga • H654 • NBS
132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle Of Wight PO30 5LH
☎ 0983 529594

Over the past year, Chuck has become one of the favourite characters on the PD demo circuit. His antics on the long-running series of *Classy Animations* disks has earned him somewhat of a cult status, but now we have some bad news. He's about to retire. Sob!

On this, the last of the *Classy Animations* disks, there is the usual collection of cute clips, with a final swan-song for dear little Chuck, showing him in all his guises found throughout the series. These include *RoboChuck*, *Chuck of Thunder* and *Dracula Chuck* – to name but a few.

Seeing as this will be your last



Don't mess with this character – he's meaner than he looks. I mean, how many other cartoon characters have a false exploding head?

Life's A Bitch

ST • CH085/D • Captain Hacks
19 Latimer Drive, Laindown, Essex, SS15 4RD
☎ 0268 416888

So, Life's a Bitch, eh? This is a pretty dismal view of the world and this demo doesn't really help matters along to any great extent! The disk starts off with some nice cartoon pictures of the coders, but when the demo starts properly things soon fall into a rut.

The *Beat Nick Screen* is a bog-standard scroller backed with a very 70s 'progressive rock' soundtrack. A moving chessboard has been thrown in to try and make it seem more impressive – but it doesn't.

The *AK Screen* is another 'user-movable ball sprites' demo. The graphics aren't hot, but the music gets off to a good start, sounding very techno. Unfortunately, this too descends into the usual pappy affair, sounding like that early 70s hit *Popcorn*.

Chrome continues the user-definable animation theme by giving you control over a rippling plasma screen. Unfortunately, the colours are too garish to achieve anything remotely pretty and the music is awful.

The only time the demo threatens to be good is on *Megascroll 2*. The graphics are rubbish, concentrating on impressive programming to produce a gigantic typeface scrolling across the screen. The problem is guys, is that it looks very boring. The music is good, though (if a little short), being based around the piano line of U2's *New Years Day* single. The question is: is it good enough to warrant getting hold of the disk? No, not really.

ST 45%

Hardcore III

Amiga • 1371 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

In the earlier days of home computer programming, the majority of coders seemed to be into heavy metal music. However, things these days are a lot different.

HARDCORE
III
F1 The Prodigy - Charly
F2 T99 - Anasthasia
F3 Cubic 22 - Night in Motion
Press Ctrl-C before selecting another track

***Herdcore III*: a simple logo and select screen leave you to concentrate on the hard techno tracks, and they're worth concentrating on**

The birth of computer-music and the ability to produce wild and wacky graphic effects has caused a shift in the approach to producing music demos. Most people these days have shifted away from the grind-guitar tracks of old and are getting into the serious techno-dance field, a fact which is well illustrated by the *Hardcore III* demo.

The disk contains sampled and remixed versions of three recent techno singles: Prodigy's *Charly*, T-99's *Anasthasia* and Cubic 22's *Night in Motion* (a personal favourite).

All three tracks are decent enough versions of the original tracks, but they seem to lack the essential punch that made the singles so enjoyable. For example, *Night in Motion* quickly

cont. on p86

A soggy landing as Mr Potato Head takes a dive

The Chips Are Up

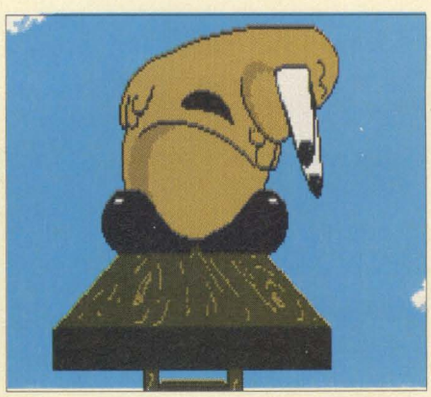
Amiga • 1160 • Amiganuts
169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX ☎ 0703 785680

Hands up all those who remember the Mr Potato Head toys you had as a tiny sprog. If you do recall this rather odd character, then you may be interested in the animated works of Chris Hill. A few months ago he released the first of his *Mr Potato Head* animations, with the spuddy character dancing about on a stage in front of a rather bemused audience. Well now he's made a return in *The Chips are Up*.

This time, he's attempting to show his bravado in a much more ambitious venture – leaping off a high-diving board into a damp sponge. The cartoon is in two parts, the first showing Mr Potato Head's tentative climb up the ladder to prepare for his jump, and the second detailing the death-defying plunge itself.

The animation style is quite brash, with bright colours and bold artwork to portray the story, but this style works very well with the character. Chris Hill has obviously improved his animation technique a great deal to bring us this clip, so future outings should be absolutely superb.

Who knows? He may even oust the great Eric Schwartz to become the top Amiga demo animator!



A fear of heights? Not for this bold potato! Well the *Chips are Up* after all! (Look, I know it's an atrocious pun, but I didn't invent it, so don't blame me)

AMIGA 87%

cont. from p85

settles into a groove, whereas the original version was frantic, manic and leaped from theme to theme, making it difficult to pin down.

Hardcore III is a valiant attempt at bringing more hard core dance music to the Amiga and is worth a look for any rave fans.

AMIGA 83%

Techno Attack

Amiga • 5510 • 17-Bit
PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

Continuing the theme of hard core, techno, rave-dance music, *Techno Attack* brings some more killer grooves to the Amiga.

Unlike the *Hardcore III* disk, the actual music screen is pretty basic, most of the the graphics being restricted to the intro sequence. There is a link between the two demos though, as they both contain versions of Prodigy's *Charly*. It has to be said that the *Techno Attack* version is the better of the two, capturing more of the frantic feel of the record.

Some suitable rave imagery to introduce the *Techno Attack* music disk

The rest of the disk is taken up by some more original works, each being patched together using breakbeats, beeps, noises and vocal loops from various records. Some people may call this plagiarism, but the alternative argument is that a lot of creative thought has been put into the pieces to make them work. The opinion around here learns more towards the latter by

AMIGA 86%

ULM New Year Demo

ST • CH071/D • Captain Hacks
19 Latimer Drive, Laindown,
Essex SS15 4RD
☎ 0268 416888

After the ubiquitous bouncy logo and dodgy intro music (from the game *Menace* – good at the time, but rather dated these days), the demo loads up an impressive digitised piccy of a clown. The colours are bright and sharp, achieving a good overall result on the visual side, but the music is just about the worst I have ever had the misfortune to endure!

The other demos on the disk are of a similar nature (except that none of the other graphics quite match the quality of the clown), with one notable exception.

The *Zoolook* demo lacks visual punch (it features a a dodgy picture of a cobra) but the music is actually rather good. Admittedly it's a touch quiet and fuzzy at times, but what you've got here is the entire Jean Michel Jarre track to listen to. This is a surprising thing to find on a compilation, since this is usually the kind of thing only found on his own.

ST 78%

Going nutty over ray-tracing • Going nutty over ray-tracing

When it comes to 3D ray-traced animations, Amiganuts United has always been one company to showcase new talent on the Amiga. This month they've got four new clips on offer, and all of them are pretty damned good.

Ray-tracing programs calculate the path of light from a source and map it onto objects to create natural-looking shadows and reflections. This is a very tortuous process involving incredibly complex calculations. A single image can take many hours to render. Animations are compiled from sequences of these pre-calculated images. You get the better side of the bargain, getting to see all the wonderful life-like piccies without the wait.

These four demos have all been produced with the same system, so they have a uniform look. The quality does vary, but they're still some of the best 3D animations available on PD at the moment. All the following demos are available from:
Amiganuts, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX ☎ 0703 785680

Time Flies

Amiga • 1169 • Amiganuts

Time Flies is probably the best of the bunch, showing a clock opening to enable the workings to fly around the room before returning to their resting place.

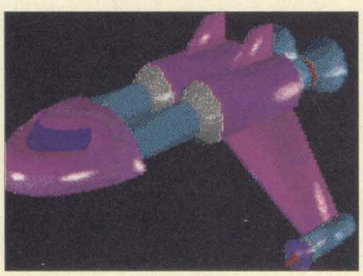
Spooky poltergeist effects abound as this clock whizzes around the room

AMIGA 91%

Warpdrive

Amiga • 1165 • Amiganuts

Warpdrive captures the feel of the starship Enterprise engaging its warp engines, complete with the 'stretch into the distance' effect, like in *Star Trek – The Next Degeneration.*



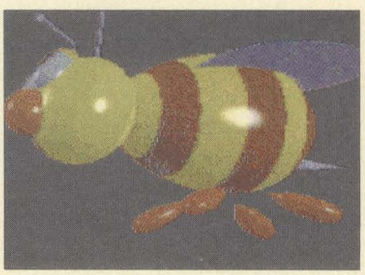
Engines running... engage hyperspace engines... and hit *Warpdrive*!

AMIGA 90%

Busy Bee

Amiga • 1166 • Amiganuts

Busy Bee leans more towards the cute side, with a rounded, shiny bee with big eyes and a red nose bumbling about the screen. It makes a pleasant change.



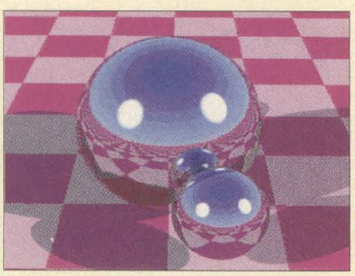
Who says that bees are nasty things? This one looks decidedly cute to me

AMIGA 90%

Orbiters

Amiga • 1167 • Amiganuts

Orbiters covers the abstract art approach, consisting of a set of steel orbs revolving and floating over the (pretty standard) chessboard surface. Just a tad too familiar.



An abstract approach to animation as some steel balls cavort over a chequered table

AMIGA 82%

AMIGA PUBLIC DOMAIN LIBRARY

AMIGA DEMOS

Some people love them, some people cannot see the point of them, but they are here to stay!
There is no better way to show off your Amiga!

D 001 ALCATRAZ MEGADEMO 4 (3 DISKS) Brilliant! One of the biggest.
D 008 STATIC BYTES MEGADEMO Six parts, clever stuff.
D 014 CRYPTOBURNERS MEGADEMO 2 Contains some good demos. worth a look.
D 033 TOMSOFT TRIP TO MARS. Vector graphics with a theme *
D 034 BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) A classic! Not to be missed but beware of the very risque cartoons.
D 035 CRIONICS MEGADEMO Another great! Famous for the Madonna part.
D 061 POSSESSED MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Good animated space intro
D 067 MIRAGE MEGADEMO (1 MEG) Yet another good one. Some good FX.
D 078 CRIONICS NEVERWARE (1 MEG) Famed for the brill Madonna graphic.
D 080 KATHARIS MEGADEMO From Poland! Famous X-Copy demo, plus.
D 081 INTUITION MEGADEMO Includes the flashiest ever acild demo.
D 091 FILLET THE FISH Similar to PUGGS, but not as good, still brill.
D 125 DEXION MEGADEMO Underrated at the time. Old but good
D 135 REBELS MEGADEMO Excellent for its time. Good demos.
D 136 ALCATRAZ MEGADEMO Again underrated at the time but very good.
D 138 RAF MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Still fresh after all this time!
D 141 PHENOMENA MEGADEMO Brilliant group today, always been good.
D 146 RSI MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) An all time great! Still good today! Great music and graphics. A must!!
D 150 IAN & MICK MEGADEMO Inc. classic toilet door demo.
D 153 PUGGS IN SPACE Not generally classed as a megademo, but not to be missed. Great for the kids.
D 160 TRILOGY MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Includes game, a classic, contains a joke, or is it a bug? You decide.
D 161 PREDATORS MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Don't miss this one, great sound, graphics and game. Another classic.
D 166 SILENTS MEGADEMO Early Silents, the brilliance is born!
D 180 SCOOPEX MENTAL HANGOVER Another classic which pushed the boundaries of the Amiga light years on.
D 190 RSI CEBIT DEMO. Terrific demo, with the best ever music *
D 223 BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO 2 Not quite as good as the first, stillgood!
D 225 HORIZON MEGADEMO (Sleeping Bag) Superb ray traced anim. Great
D 236 GOLDFIRE ULTIMATE FX....This group continues to improve!!
D 242 3-D DEMOS....Get out your 3-D glasses and CHECK THESE OUT!

POWER DEMOS

(All demos in this section require loads of memory)

P 001/2 WALKER DEMO 1 (2 MEG 2 DISKS)
P 003/4 WALKER DEMO 2 (2 MEG 2 DISKS)
P 021-026 UPGRADE(1.5 MEG 2 DRIVES 6 yes 6 disks!!!) multi part anim
P 010/11 HEADKICK ANIM (2 MEG 2 DISKS plus HARD-DRIVE)
P 012/3/4 STATION AT KHERN (2 MEG 3 DISKS)
P 030/1 DRAGONS LAIR 2 GAME DEMO Superb (3 MEG, 2 DISKS)
P 032/3/4 BUZZED Great Ray traced anim (2 MEG, 3 DISKS)
P 035/6/7/8 AUTOMATED LIGHT (BATTLESTAR GALACTICA) (3 MEG, 4 DISKS)
P 044/5 ANTI LEMMING DEMO (2 MEG)Excellent Eric Shwartz animation.
P 046/7 THE DATING GAME (3 MEG 2 DISK SET) 4 mins long anim!! Truly impressive Eric Schwartz demo
P 050-3 TOBIAS RITCHER: LANDING (4 MEG) (4 DISKS) Brilliant!

AMIGA DEMOS

D 243 KEFRENS - THE WALL.....Great intro! Good graffix, then so so
D 259 PHENOMENA ENIGMA Absolutely Awesome!!! Fantastic, Get it
D 261 SIMPSONS DEMO BY DECAY: Probably the best so far. (1 MEG)
D 264 ANALOGUE MEGA DEMO. Great intro and novel demo selection.
D 265 GALLOW MEGADEMO Purple Haze! Great colours, fair demos.
D 267 BASS MEGA DEMO. Great housey music throughout.
D 269 PULLING THE TRIGGER. Loved the music! Well presented demos (1 meg)
D 294 SILENTS: ICE MEGADEMO (1 MEG) Brill demo, More interesting for coders.
D 295 TOMSOFT: VIRTUAL WORLD (1 MEG) Its a classic. Best this year.
D 296 MAGNETIC FIELDS: HYSTERISIS. Good demo, now loader friendly.
D 299 TAS EGO TRIP (1 MEG) Huge demo, great music and value.
D 700 PMC ALPHA OMEGA Ray-tracing, vectors, excellent.
D 704 ITS MENTAL 3 Sick jokes, cartoons etc. Not for the nervous.
D 705 VOYAGE Cleverly linked demos. Good vectors.
D 706 THE CULT: VECTOR DANCE 2 Good GFX and original vector FX.
D 708 ANARCHY DEMO So new I can't remember what it was called!!
S 393/4/5 DEFINATIVE MADONNA SLIDESHOW...(3 disks) 1 meg & 2 drives
S 441 INVISIBLE WORLD SLIDESHOW. See it and itch. Micro bugs
S 486/7 WWF ANIM AND SLIDES (1 MEG) (2 DISK SET) US wrestling
H 545 JET FIGHTER ANIM...Similar to The Run, but far far better (1 MEG)
H 555 BATMAN THE MOVIE ANIMATION (1 MEG)....Good funny cartoon
H 559 MAGICIAN AND JOGGER ANIMATIONS (1 MEG). .Ray traced anims.
H 560 CAR & UNICYCLE ANIMATION (1 MEG)....Brill anim, a must for fans!
H 564 EVIL DEAD DEMO (1 MEG).. Get the goulies, before they get yours
H 565 RGB & FOCUS (1 MEG)....The famous 'stretching nose' animation!
H 573 TOO MUCH 3D (1 MEG)....The spaceship flies out of the screen!
H 576 IRAQ DEMO Amusing animation of what might have been
H 577 MORE AEROTOONS More in the series of Stealthy cartoons
H 579 MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS More cute anims from Steve Packer
H 607 WINGS ANIMATION. Brilliant stuff and long too! (1 MEG)Good
H 636/7 STAR TREK MEGADEMO (1 MEG, 2 DISKS) Best of Ritcher!
H 645 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 2 Super-Star chuck anims
H 647 VIETNAM ANIM (1 MEG) Another Stealthey-type animation
H 650 OPTIMUM PRESSURE CRISIS (1 MB) Great series of animated slides
H 652 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 3 Latest works from Steve.
H 653 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 4 .....and more. YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 5 Final in the series
X110 FRAXION HORROR Great cartoon graphic demo of nasty stuff.

MUSIC

M 005 MAHONEY & KAKTUS Brilliant music disk
M 030 DIGITAL CONCERT 2: Over 12 mins of mixed house music.
M 200/1/2 SAE AMAZING TUNES 2 (3 DISKS 1 MEG)...Superb!
M 212 MAG FIELDS CHIP FESTIVAL....Another huge collection.
M 216/7 RAF MEGA MIX 2 (2 DISK SET)....Good quality music mix.
M 226 DYNAMITE BEATS 4...Another very classy music disk from Max
M 230 DEXION PARTY MUSIC AND PICCYS....A good disk as always
M 232 ALCATRAZ MUZIC.....Classy presentation, 3 good tracks!!!
M 269 ALCATRAZ MORE THAN MUSIC. Superb.
M 311 LIONS: INXS (1 MEG) 2 tracks of remixed INXS.
M 314 MAG FIELDS: SPACED OUT 1 (1 MB) Beaty, housey music.
M 315 MAG FIELDS: SPACED OUT 2 (1 MB) More of the same. Good.
M 316 LSD: DON'T PANIC (1 MB) Well presented good sounds

ANIMATION SPECIAL!

The works of Tobias Richter. All require 1Mb.
H 002 Agatron Anim. 2 Misc - Jet fighter landing. Basic.
H 003 Agatron Anim. 3 Star Trek - Shuttle fly past.
H 005 Agatron Anim. 5 Star Trek - Klingon fires Torpedoes
H 007 Agatron Anim. 7 Star Wars - Fighter doing loops etc
H 009 Agatron Anim. 9 Star Wars - Fighter flyby. Impressive
H 010 Agatron Anim. 10 Star Trek - Enterprise in dry dock
H 011 Agatron Anim. 11 Tron - Tank vs Deaktivator. Good vectors
H 012 Agatron Anim. 12 Tron Animation. Not one of the best
H 013 Agatron Anim. 13 Misc - Robo 1. A robot waving.
H 014 Agatron Anim. 14 Star Trek - Workbee and Reliant. 3 Shots.
H 017 Agatron Anim. 17 Star Trek - TWOK Animation. Short but OK.
H 018 Agatron Anim. 18 Star Trek - Enterprise fly by. Short
H 020 Agatron Anim. 20 Misc - Huey the helicopter taking off
H 023 Agatron Anim. 23 Star Trek - Fleet Manoevre. Brilliant
H 024 Agatron Anim. 24 Misc - A pen signing 'Tevox'
H 025 Agatron Anim. 25 The Run. Superb car chase. A classic
H 026 Agatron Anim. 26 Misc - A ship rocking at sea. Poss Bug.
H 027 Agatron Anim. 27 Misc - A book opening!
H 028 Agatron Anim. 28 Star Trek - Shuttle and Enterprise
H 029 Agatron Anim. 29 Star Wars - Millenium Falcon in chase
H 030 Agatron Anim. 30 Star Wars - Millenium Falcon goes hyper
H 031 Agatron Anim. 31 Misc - Porsch rising out of a table
H 032 Agatron Anim. 32 Space - Space probe flying away.
H 033 Agatron Anim. 33 Space - Space probe passing. Short.
H 034 Agatron Anim. 34 Star Trek - The Space Office. A bit short
H 035 Agatron Anim. 35 Space - Space probe flying away.
H 036 Agatron Anim. 36 Star Trek - Bird of pray loop de loop!
H 037 Agatron Anim. 37 Misc - Tobias goes knackers!

FISH, T-BAG, AND GLAMOUR DISKS

We now have all the FISH disks up to 520. The FISH AQUARIUM holds up to FF470, Beyond that is a Fish index disk. We currently have TBag disks up to 54. For contents of Fish, TBag, and all the other disks check out our latest catalogue disk. IT'S AMAZING11 (1MB only)
We also have a collection of over 50 glamour disks. 5 or 10 disk 'best selection' packs available on request.

GAMES

G 107 STAR TREK GAME Good graphic adventure, Best with 1 meg (2 disks)
G 117 EATMINE Addictive Boulderdash clone. (not A1500 etc)
G 133 PD GAMES COMPO Good selection inc Welltrix and Breakout.
G 136 DRIP Very tricky painter type game. Almost commercial quality!
G 142 PD GAMES COMPO 3....Great Pacman plus 2 others.
G 143 JEOPARDY (1 MEG)....Version of the board game Risk!
G 152 PD GAMES COMPO 9....Battlemech, Bullrun (Battle Sim) and more
G 154 BATTLEFORCE (1 MEG)....Strategy battle game.
G 159 ANTEP (1 MEG)....RPG also SLOTS, a good car chase game.
G 170 MEGABALL. The ultimate PD Breakout game?
G 171 ZEUS Simple but addictive puzzle game. Great.
G 175 CUBULUS. Great 'Rubics Cube' type puzzle. Excellent.
G 178 WIZZYS QUEST (1 MEG) Super game for PD. (Shareware).
G 179 LLAMATRON By Jeff Minter, blast the beasties (Shareware).
G 180 BLOCK IT 1.2 A tough but addictive puzzle game.
G 181 JT's GAME COMPENDIUM Some old, but most are new.
G 182 MENTAL IMAGE GAMEDISK 1 A superb compilation of new games
G 185 BLACKJACK LAB More serious than a game, inc tutor!
G 187 SUPER SKODA CHALLENGE (1MB) A Lada fun for 4 players.
G 189 NO MANS LAND (1MB) A good 2 player shoot each other game.
G 197 NBS GREAT GAMES VOL 3... Super new games
G 198 PATIENCE CARD GAMES..Superb games and graphics

EDUCATION

E 006/7 LEARN AND PLAY....Games plus maths and words (kids aged 5+)
E 008 TALKING COLOURING BOOK.....Draw the pictures then colour them

NBS PD UPDATE 8 WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON. Recent existing customers will be mailed their copy free, to secure yours, just send in a stamped self-addressed envelope.

UTILITIES

THE NBS BEGINNERS GUIDE TO VIRUS

(and what to do about it) DISK REF U 110
"There is probably more software destroyed by the ignorant use of a virus killer than the virus's themselves!"
Confused by virus killers? This new kit presents for the first time a new and totally safe way to test for a virus, and when you've definitely found one, helps you kill it. Will locate all known or unknown virus (excluding Hard Drives) Full and simple docs included!

U 103 ULTIMATE VIRUS KILLER..Updated now knows 124 viruses
U 107 VIRUS CATALOGUE. What it does, how, and where from.
U 225 AMIBASE A good database. Start a disk catalogue now.
U 233 UEDIT Good Public Domain Wordprocessor.
U 267 ELECTROCAD DEMO (1 MEG) Circuit diagram design tool. No save in demo.
U 611 MED 3.11B. Latest version of this great music utility.
U 616 AMIGA FOX Public Domain basic DTP
U 619 MESSYSID. Dreams answered. Working Messydos plus SID.
U 621/4 C-MANUAL. Latest 4 disk C Manual by Anders Bjerin.
U 629/30 COMMSPILATION. 2 Disks packed with modem utilities.
U 631 SONIC DEVELOPMENTS MUSIC PACK 3 Latest Trackers inc source
U 633 PRINTER DRIVER GENERATOR KIT plus over 50 drivers
U 638/9 WINDOWSBENCH V1.0 Nice workbench alternative
U 640 IMPLODER V.4 A brand new cruncher/archiving utility
U 644 PCQ PASCAL SHELL Easily used. Edit, assemble etc. Docs

CLIP ART

Ultimate clip art collection. All the disks in our library plus others, have been collated, checked and sorted, by ARK. Most disks packed full.

U 341 CLIP ART 1 Animals plus collection information
U 342 CLIP ART 2 Animals, Architecture, People, Art 1
U 343 CLIP ART 3 Art 2 (fonts)
U 344 CLIP ART 4 Arrows, Art Deco, Logos, Stars, Explosions
U 345 CLIP ART 5 Education, Financial, Art misc, Symbols
U 346 CLIP ART 6 Food and Drink
U 347 CLIP ART 7 Environment, Food and Drink, Health and Home
U 348 CLIP ART 8 Valentines, Weddings, Leisure
U 349 CLIP ART 9 Birthdays, Xmas, Easter, New Year etc
U 350 CLIP ART 10 People (Children, Family, Fashion, Romance)
U 351 CLIP ART 11 People (Men Woman)
U 352 CLIP ART 12 Signs (Bears, Christmas, Misc)
U 353 CLIP ART 13 Sports (American Football to Warter Polo)
U 354 CLIP ART 14 Work and Trades 1, Transport
U 355 CLIP ART 15 Work and Trades 2

AMOS

NUMBER 1 AMOS LICENCEWARE AUTHORISED DEALER FOR THE THIRD MONTH!!

ALL THE LATEST AMOS LICENCEWARE, UP TO DISK 42 IN STOCK.

Please note disks cost £3.50 which includes contribution to programmer.

ORDERING DETAILS

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES/PO PAYABLE TO NBS AND SEND TO: NBS, 1 CHAIN LANE, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT PO30 5QA.
TELEPHONE (0983) 529594
FAX (0983) 821599

Or if you have a Credit card you can phone or fax your order to us. Please remember to include 50p towards postage and packing to total order. All orders (up to 3kg) despatched by first class post, please add 30p for recorded delivery.

Access

All used postage stamps donated to 'Guide Dogs for the Blind'

VISA

WE LOVE INTERNATIONAL ORDERS

All orders sent by Air Mail. For European orders please add 25p per disk. World Orders add 50p per disk. International payments by Credit Card, British Postal Orders, Eurocheque, any cheque with a UK cashing address, or cash (Registered letter).

NBS PUBLIC DOMAIN £1.25
AMOS PUBLIC DOMAIN DISKS ..£1.50
AMOS LICENCEWARE £3.50

Price is per disk NOT per Title

PLEASE REMEMBER TO ADD 50P PER ORDER TOWARDS POSTAGE AND PACKING.

SPECIAL OFFER! TWO FREE DISKS FOR EVERY 10 ORDERED

Have you got what it

Selling public domain software is no job for the half-hearted do-gooder or the budding entrepreneur out to make a fast buck, as Paul Ciupek will tell you. He runs the respected NBS PD library, so he knows what it takes and has a few wise words to share with prospective PD librarians...

Setting up a PD library is just a matter of collecting a few disks, thinking up some arbitrary price, sticking a cheapo small ad in the classified section of some computer magazine and waiting for the orders and the dosh to roll in, right? Wrong.

I receive numerous calls every week from people wanting to set up a public domain library, and seeking some advice. Some are quite sensible, and only want to start something very small, perhaps to supply to a local club, shop or mates at school. Others are considering spending thousands of pounds on sophisticated equipment to cope with the many hundreds of orders they optimistically expect to get every day.

My advice to all of them is the same – if you're looking for a time consuming but enjoyable hobby, with perhaps some financial reward, then go ahead, but if you're expecting to retire on the profits in a couple of years, then think again.

The bare essentials

In the same way that a bloke with a camcorder wouldn't win an ITV franchise, owning a computer doesn't automatically mean that you've got what it takes to run a PD Library.

There are several basic requirements for any public domain library. The first must be somewhere to operate – even the smallest library needs quite a bit of room to run comfortably. Thought must also be given to storage of disks, packing and stationery. In order to get hold of items cheaply you will have to buy in bulk, so be prepared to have a few cardboard boxes piled up; even the smallest library needs a large room to itself!

Running a library is not just a case of packing up a few disks. I find more than half my time is taken up just looking at and reviewing new PD, sorting out bugs where possible and compiling disks. Hunting viruses is also important – if you want to upset your customers, sending them a virus is a very good way.

I find most of this 'background work' is best done late at night, *very* late at night! Don't forget the book-keeping, preparation of adverts and catalogues, dealing with magazines and suppliers, and, of course, answering customers' queries. These all take up a surprising amount of valuable time.

If you intend to run the library part-time, you'll need a very understanding boss. Access to a phone during the day is essential. Even if you never talk to your customers – which is not recomended – you will

Software sources

There are a network of 'swappers' who will either swap disk for disk or demand a small consideration in cash or disks for the latest 'wares'. Contacts like these can provide up to 100 new disks every month, but you have to take the good with the bad.

A modem is a useful if expensive method but you usually will have to be 'in on the scene' to gain access to the best. When you get established, groups or coders will send their latest creations to you, to get it circulated.

Finally you can swap, or as a last resort, actually buy PD software from another PD library.

takes?

still have to contact suppliers and advertisers, and they will need to be able to contact you. It is impossible to run successfully by letters alone!

If you are thinking of running a library then presumably you already have a computer. But the minimum requirement for a library is at least two machines so that if one breaks down you have a back-up – customers won't want to hear your sob

"If you're expecting to retire on the profits in a couple of years, then think again."

story when they ring up to ask where their butterfly-cataloguing program has got to. What is essential is at least two floppy drives, otherwise disk copying is going to be an experience akin to taking an Open University course in accountancy.

The ideal situation would be to have a commercial disk duplicating machine, but that will set you back somewhere in the region of £5,000.

A printer is pretty useful, and as the library grows a hard drive or two will help. A thorough understanding of your computer and the software available is essential. A good deal of sales will come from, "Have you a program that will...?" or, "I've just received my disks but I don't understand how to...?" You need to know, or at least know where to look for, the answers. It will help to keep tabs on new releases, so expect to spend up to £20 a month on the popular magazines (including *Public Domain*, of course).

If you want to run a successful PD library then you're going to need a good selection of disks, and, as you can see NBS has a few thousand titles on offer, all carefully catalogued

No matter how big or small your library becomes, if you are selling disks you are running a real business. A close eye has to be kept on all your costs and strict records kept. Your 'profits' should be carefully calculated to ensure you cover all your expenses.

I watched one library at a trade show in London last year, and in order to get business, they were

cont. on p90

Hidden costs • Hidden costs • Hidden costs • Hidden costs • Hidden costs

According to the distribution rules on most public domain software, you cannot charge for the program on the disk (of course, the rules governing licenceware and shareware are slightly different, but that's another story – one we covered last issue, in fact). But you are allowed to charge a fee to cover duplication and distribution costs. So what are these costs? A look through the computer press will show that a good quality 3.5-inch disk works out to around 30p if bought in bulk, so anything you make on top of that is profit, right?

WRONG!

There are all sorts of other hidden costs which mount up to a considerable sum...

TAXING PROBLEMS

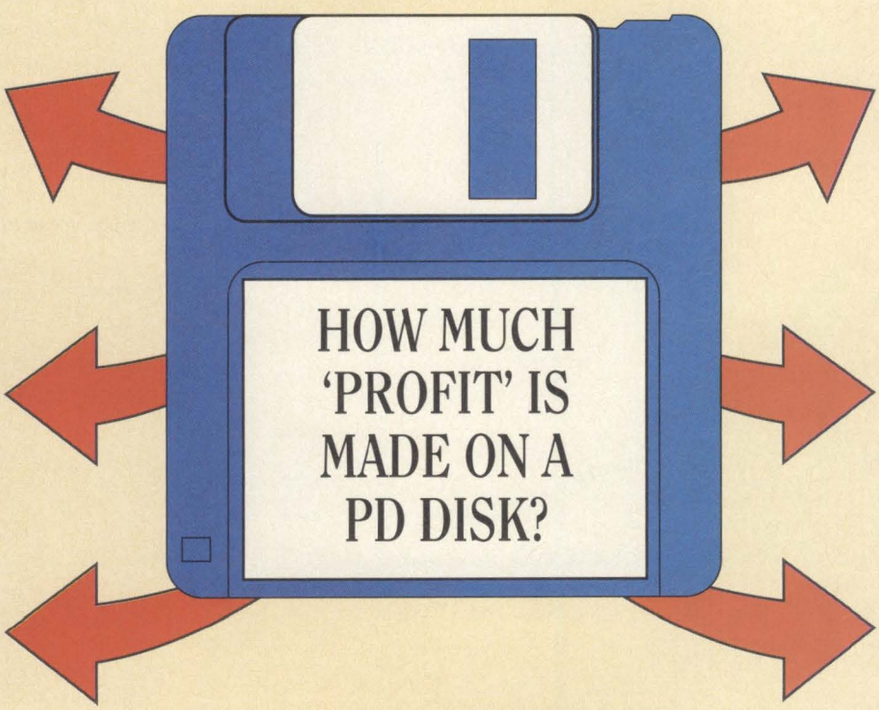
Whether you treat your library as a part-time venture, or a successful full-time job, if you start to expand the taxman will want his cut in VAT. Once this happens, you might also find that an accountant becomes necessary, and they never come cheap.

BILLS AND BREAKDOWNS

You must make an allowance for electricity, telephone bills, wear and tear on equipment, lost, incorrect and problem disks that will be returned and dozens of other expenses which, although they may be small, all add up!

KEEPING YOUR CUSTOMERS

It's also a good idea to include a catalogue and an order form with every order you send out to encourage your customers to order more disks. This whittles away at the budget, too.



CREATING AN IMAGE

You need a library logo that you can print on all your stationery and disk labels. Imagine how (un)impressed you would be if the disks you ordered arrived with hand-written scrawl on the labels. Printed disk labels and an accompanying acknowledgement letter printed on headed notepaper will give your library a much more professional sheen, and will hopefully encourage your customers to use you again. This can put an extra 1p on the price of every disk.

ADVERTISING

No one will buy your disks unless you advertise your library. A page in a good magazine will cost an average of £1,000. Smaller adverts will cost a lot less, but in general it is true to say that the amount of business you do will be in proportion to how much you spend on advertising.

POSTAGE AND PACKAGING

It will cost you a minimum of about 34p to send out a single disk first class, but remember that you will mainly be dealing with multiple orders.

Located on the Isle of Wight NBS is a very professionally-run library. Paul (front left) has a dedicated team to help with the cataloguing, duplicating and packing of disks

cont. from p89

charging only 50p per disk for their software. They didn't have a stock of pre-copied disks so were producing the disks to order.

A quick calculation reveals that even if they had a continuous queue of customers, it was not possible to recover the cost of the stand with the 'profit' they were making per disk. The library, not surprisingly, has ceased trading.

How low can you go?

A look into the short but volatile history of public domain libraries will demonstrate an interesting lesson. All the libraries that advertised in the January 1990 edition of *Amiga Format* (*Public Domain*'s sister magazine) are still alive and well today. All of them (except one, and that is only recently – let's see how long that lasts) have never sold disks at ridiculously low prices.

Finally, you will require dedication, commitment and a realisation of just what you will be creating. When I started NBS it was fun, and a hobby. But eventually it was something that totally filled my spare time. Now it's a full time job. The average working day is 12 hours, and that's six days a week. Most people that run a library will tell you that they did not expect it to be so time consuming, and there is more than one library that has ceased to exist because the guy that ran it simply couldn't handle the pace.

When you start, remember that you have a commitment to your customers. If you want your library to succeed you're going to have to make some sacrifices. When it comes down to the pile of orders, or a night down the pub with the lads, the orders must always come first. PD

Paul Ciupek runs the NBS Public Domain library which is at 132 Gunville Road, Newport, The Isle Of Wight PO30 5LH ☎ 0983 529594. The library charges £1.25 per disk.

TOP 10

essential steps to setting up your own successful PD library

1. **COLLECTING DISKS** – Most libraries start with the owner collecting PD as a hobby, but if you're going 'public' you'll need at least 200 disks to start with, but the more the better. All disks need to be referenced, described and catalogued.

2. **THE RIGHT HARDWARE** – Make sure that your equipment is up to the job. If your computer is a bit dodgy, get a new one. And if you're expecting a large turnover, then you'll need at least another computer and two floppy drives to run an efficient service.

3. **THINK OF A GOOD NAME** – Remember, you'll have to keep this name for ever! The New Library On The Block might seem clever and witty now (or perhaps not...), but it gives the wrong image and will date very quickly.

4. **DECIDE ON YOUR PRICE** – You should spend some time carefully considering how much to charge. Go too high and you'll probably not get many orders. Go too low and you won't cover your costs. Work out how many orders you'll need in a day to cover your costs.

5. **ADVERTISE** – Decide which magazine looks good to you. The price of advertising can vary by a surprising amount, but generally you pay for what you get. Remember to do your sums. Some new companies use blanket advertising campaigns with adverts in all the computer magazines. To pay for that sort of coverage requires over 200 orders a day, and that means three or four computers and four staff working flat out!

6. **WORKING SYSTEM** – Sort out your system for dealing with orders. It needs to be quick and efficient. When Mrs Whatsername rings up asking where her order has got to, you must be able to trace it through your system. Don't forget these records may be open to inspection by the tax and VAT man! Work out how long it takes to pack up a typical order. A single person will be lucky if they can pack over 40 in a day, and remember that you need time to do some duplicating as well.

7. **BANKING** – Open a bank account in the name of your library. You should never use a personal account! Expect to inject quite a bit of your own personal funds into it at the start.

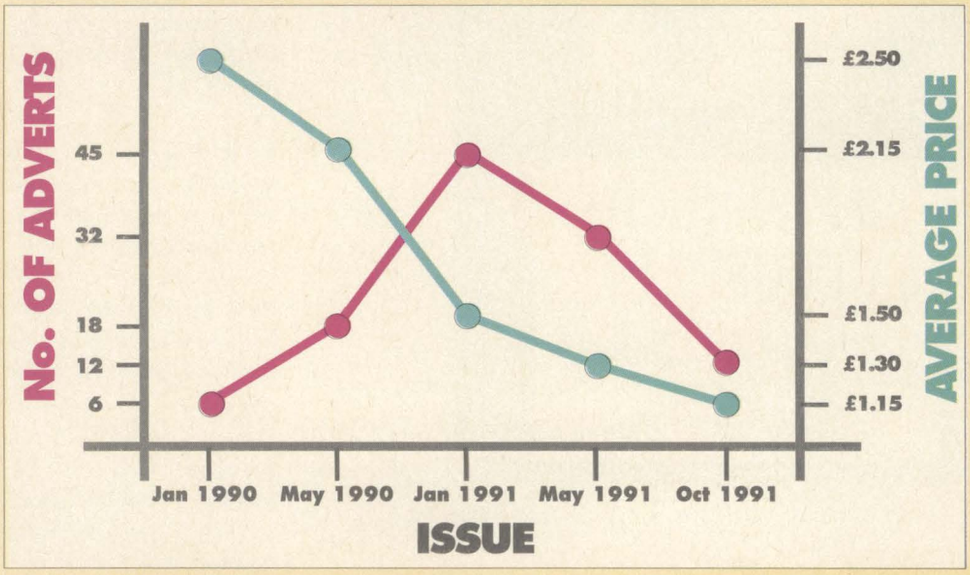
8. **PRINTED STATIONARY** – You must have a good image. You will need headed notepaper and business cards too. Most, if not all libraries use their own custom labels on their PD disks.

9. **MATERIALS** – You will obviously need to buy in plenty of blank disks, and don't forget labels and packing materials, right down to staples and sticky tape.

10. **PATIENCE** – Don't expect too much too soon. It may take a few adverts to get established in an already crowded marketplace. Meanwhile the bills will start rolling in, and you may not get the orders you expected. Good luck!

Rise and fall...

A look into back issues of *Amiga Format* reveals how the number of PD libraries has grown and shrunk, and how the average price of PD has dropped. Bear in mind that the circulation of the magazine has more than doubled in the time period covered.



There was also a directory of PD libraries in *Format*. Before it stopped it peaked at around 60 different libraries! Where are they now?

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- Epson and IBM Emulation
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RRP: £239
COLOUR KIT: £38
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £302
SAVING: £123
SILICA PRICE: £179

£179
+VAT=£222.08 ref: PRI 2209

Colour Option Extra - See Accessories

192 CPS **136** COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 9x - 9 pin - 136 column
- 192cps Draft, 48cps NLQ
- 8K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 240×240dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
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TOTAL RRP: £354
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RRP: £325
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £350
SAVING: £101
SILICA PRICE: £249

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+VAT=£292.58 ref: PRI 2100

24 PIN PRINTER

Colour Option Extra - See Accessories

192 CPS **136** COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 24x - 24 pin - 136 column
- 192cps Draft, 64cps LQ
- 8K Printer Buffer + 4 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 360×360dpi
- Epson, IBM and NEC P6 Emulation
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RRP: £489
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £514
SAVING: £165
SILICA PRICE: £349

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+VAT=£410.08 ref: PRI 2574

24 PIN PRINTERS

FREE! COLOUR KIT

216 CPS **80** COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 24e - 24 pin - 80 column
- 216cps Draft, 72cps LQ
- 8K Printer Buffer + 6 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 360×360dpi
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COLOUR KIT: £38
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £428
SAVING: £169
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Colour Option Extra - See Accessories

192 CPS **80** COLUMN

- Citizen 224 - 24 pin - 80 column
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24 PIN PRINTER

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80 COLUMN

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STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £274
SAVING: £105
SILICA PRICE: £169

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COLOUR KITS
PRA 1236 Swift 9/24/24e £35.25
PRA 1240 Swift 9x/24x £35.25

PN48 ACCESSORIES
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Which computer(s), if any, do you own? 55C

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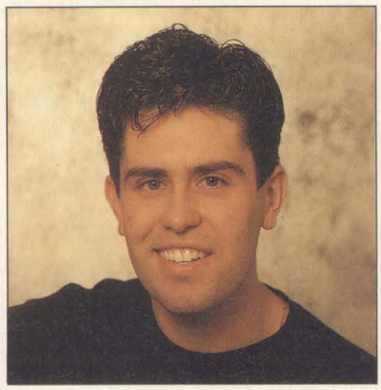
Home & Education



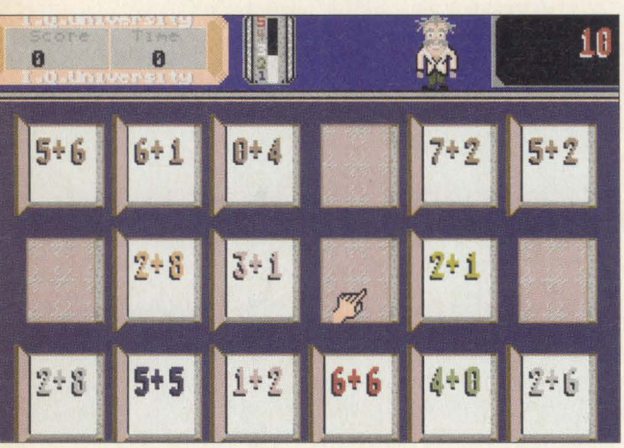
Where can you find maths lessons disguised as shoot-'em-ups, a 3D atom drawing program, the answer to your creative needlework mental block, a worm simulator and mad teachers? In the public domain, that's where. Dave Golder goes back to school to learn about what PD has to offer the hungry knowledge-hunter...

Numerical-Go-Round

(PD)

ST • EDU.20 • ST Club 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney Street, Nottingham NG1 1LX

George Orwell once said, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two equals five." Perhaps, George, but philosophy won't get you anywhere in *Numerical-Go-Round*. A thorough grasp of mental arithmetic would be a better bet.



***Numerical-Go-Round* is actually quite a tough little maths game made more difficult by the numbers being written in pastel shades**

Behind the rather clumsy title is a rather odd game. Basically a multi-choice maths game, the main playing screen of *Numerical-Go-Round* has a blackboard and a timer bar at the top and a set of 18 text books below. At the start of every level all the books are open, each revealing either a sum or a solution, depending on the level.

The game commences, the timer bar starts ticking away and a figure or sum appears on the blackboard. You simply have to find the book which contains the right sum and click on it to close it. You carry on doing this until you have closed all the books or the time is up.

Simple, yes? Unfortunately no. The timer goes by far too quickly, and the sums are written in pale pastel shades which makes it difficult to pinpoint the one you want in a hurry. You really have to be quite sharp at maths, otherwise the game is pretty frustrating.

I also worry about educational games that use schoolroom props, surely a turn-off for many kids. And the music is appalling: this is a 'play-with-the-volume-turned-down' warning.

In its favour *Numerical-Go-Round* is a very professional-looking package with no rough edges, and no waiting around for ages for screen updates. There are some pretty, if washed-out, graphics and a wide range of difficulty levels. It is also very simple to use, so you won't have to spend ages explaining the rules to your nippers. But it does seem to have an identity problem. The format, and some of the maths in the more advanced levels, makes it too difficult for the average under10 year-old, while the gameplay is too limited to attract those at a more alien-zapping age. A worthy effort but it ultimately misses its audience.

ST **68%**

Funnels & Buckets

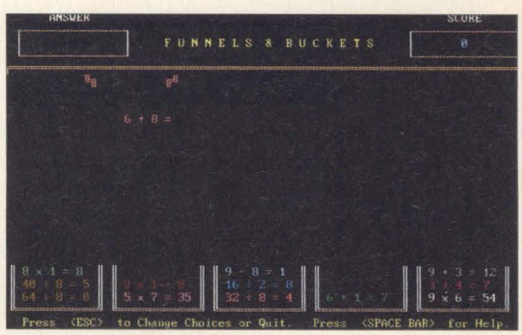
(Shareware)

PC • EED 122 • Academy, Software, PO Box 65, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 8YZ ☎ 0227 360808

Funnels & Buckets is proof that you don't need flashy graphics and stunning sound fx to produce a successful game. The graphics would not have been beyond the capabilities of a ZX81 and the sound is akin to to cat being being strangled by a violin. But it is addictive, fast-paced and a splendid way to swotting up on basic mathematical functions.

A funnel (or rather a pair of skimpy lines in a vaguely inverted triangular shape) whizzes along the top of the screen dropping sums as it goes. There are five buckets at the bottom of the screen, and you have to prevent these filling up with sums by 'popping' the sums before they reach the buckets. This you do by typing in the correct answer to the sum on your computer's keyboard.

Two little characters pop up on screen from time to time. One is called Maggie and if you get an answer right while she's around you receive bonus points. Alternatively, if Burglar crops up he takes points away whenever you try to answer a sum, regardless of whether you get the answer wrong or



OK, so *Funnels and Buckets* might not win any awards for its graphics but the gameplay is incredibly addictive

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right – what a cad! Unfortunately these characters are tiny, and as you're concentrating on other parts of the screen during the frantic gameplay, the only way you know when either of them is about is through the sound effects. So, more's the pity, you can't play with the sound off.

There are six levels of difficulty ranging from slow to very fast, though there isn't really that much difference between them. But the breathless action is part of the program's charm.

The game finishes when any of the buckets is filled with five sums, so if your sprog's a a real clever clogs the game could, in theory, go on forever. Or at least until *Thundercats* comes on the telly.

PC **79%**

Magical Young Artist

(Licenceware)

Amiga • LPD51 • Déjà Vu
25 Park Road, Wigan WN6 7AA
☎ 0942 495261

If you want to add some colour to your life, then *Magical Young Artists* has 13 to choose from.

It's a very smart colouring book program with over 30 black and white piccies for you to colour in. There are a series of 13 paintcans at the top of the screen. You click on the colour you want with the paintbrush-shaped cursor, then on the area you want to colour in and, as if by magic, it *is* coloured in.

While the concept is nothing new – there are countless colouring book programs available in the public domain – *Magical Young Artist* is exceptionally well presented. It looks great, with bright bold colours and a very impressive work screen.

The colouring in is almost instantaneous and there are no fiddly areas on which it is almost impossible to click, a problem which plagues many similar programs. An Oops feature enables you to undo the last thing you coloured in. It even has a very impressive loading sequence.

There is a wide selection of pictures, ranging from cute cartoon bears and pretty rainbows to military hardware. Unfortunately, while 30 is a lot more than you usually get with these sorts of programs, there is no facility to import any more into the program. And even worse, you can't save your masterpieces!

But its ease of use and colourful presentation should keep kids at that colouring book age engrossed for a few hours. And they won't cover their faces or your best table-cloth with purple crayon.

AMIGA **75%**

Anyone can be an artist with *Magical Young Artist*, although it does help if you've got some idea of colour co-ordination

Save The Planet

(Shareware)

PC • EDU-34 • Fantasia
Shareware, PO Box 1231,
Clutton, Bristol
☎ 0761 453716

David Icke may have made the Green Party a bit of a laughing stock, but the fact remains that there is still a world out there that we humans seem intent on destroying, not so slowly but very surely. This disk, written by concerned US coders Roger and Kathy Cox, is a timely reminder of both where we are going wrong as a race, and what, as individuals, we can do about it.

It takes the form of a very impressive diskzine, well presented and easy to use. It is divided into two main sections: *Looking At The Problem* and *Taking Action To Solve It*. The first is packed full of graphs and information on such subjects as the greenhouse effect, the extinction of the rainforests and other environmental horror stories. Did you know, for instance, that on a global scale, the six hottest years of the last century have all occurred in the last decade? It's a pity this heatwave didn't reach Skegness, really.

The section also includes a 'game', though this is a rather generous description. It starts with a graph depicting global warming since 1890. You are then given a choice of six CO_2 emission rates for the next 10 years ranging from 50 per cent to 120 per cent. The graph then plots the result. What fun! To be fair, it's really only there to make a point – that even if we reduce CO_2 emissions by half, global warming will still increase at an alarming rate.

The second section gives you handy, practical hints on how you can help. How about starting a compost

cont. on p94

It's a maths lesson, Jim, but not as we know it...

Rocket Maths

(Licenceware)

Amiga • LPD37 • Déjà Vu
25 Park Road, Wigan WN6 7AA
☎ 0942 495261

You might think that to pilot a rocket around the universe and through meteor storms that you'd need a thorough knowledge of astrophysics and quantum mechanics. Luckily all you need to take the controls of the ship in *Rocket Maths* are the basics of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication.

The game is divided into four sections. In the first three the success of your mission depends on you getting your sums right. To take off, for example, you need to answer 10 correct questions. Each second question you get right is accompanied by a little piece of animation – the astronaut walking to the ship, the engines firing up, etc – until with correct answer number 10 the ship blasts into space.

In the Star Map section you fly a haphazard course around the some solar system or other – it's certainly not ours since it contains 10 planets. They are all numbered and you have to visit each one in turn, and you do this by, surprise, surprise, answering correctly a series of sums that appears on the screen.

Dodging meteors is the aim of the next section. They whizz by your ship at an alarming rate, but you're safe so long as you don't think that two plus two is five. If you do you're likely to become very intimate with a 1,000 ton lump of space rock. Don't worry, though – the end of the meteor storm is just 10 correctly-answered sums away.

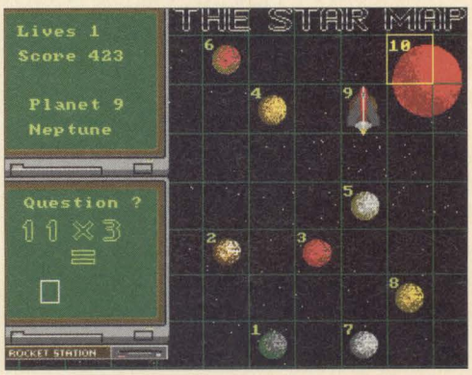
The final section has nothing to do with maths. You just have to land the ship on target using the joystick to earn a few bonus points.

You score points every time you get an answer right, the points equalling the answer to the sum. As there are three levels of difficulty, better mathematicians will be able to score higher points. You start the game with four lives, and lose one with each wrong answer. Lose all four and, you guessed it, that dreaded Game Over message pops up.

The graphics are bold and colourful, suiting the game perfectly. The animation is simple but fun, the meteor storm being especially exciting.

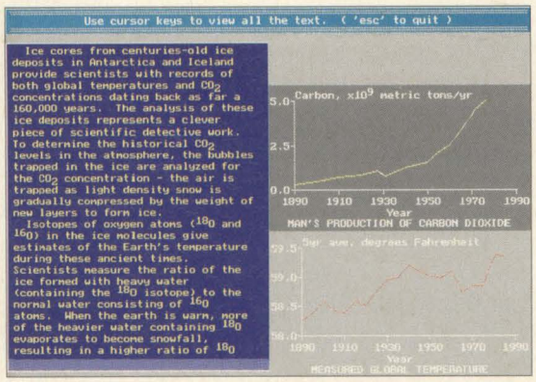
Answers are entered using the joystick – you waggle it to step through the digits then press the fire button when you're at the right one. This is probably an attempt by the writers to make the game more appealing to kids familiar with shoot-'em-ups, but the idea rather backfires as it slows the game down. It would be quicker to type in the answer from the keyboard.

The sound fx could be a bit more exciting, though. But even with these niggly drawbacks *Rocket Maths* remains on of the most fun ways to learn maths. With any luck your kids won't suspect that it's actually doing them some good.



Just work out what 11x3 is and you'll reach the final planet

AMIGA **83%**


Use cursor keys to view all the text. ('esc' to quit)
Ice cores from centuries-old ice deposits in Antarctica and Iceland provide scientists with records of both global temperatures and CO_2 concentrations dating back as far a 160,000 years. The analysis of these ice deposits represents a clever piece of scientific detective work. To determine the historical CO_2 levels in the atmosphere, the bubbles trapped in the ice are analyzed for the CO_2 concentration - the air is trapped as light density snow is gradually compressed by the weight of new layers to form ice.
Isotopes of oxygen atoms (^{18}O and ^{16}O) in the ice molecules give estimates of the Earth's temperature during these ancient times. Scientists measure the ratio of the ice formed with heavy water (containing the ^{18}O isotope) to the normal water consisting of ^{16}O atoms. When the earth is warm, more of the heavier water containing ^{18}O evaporates to become snowfall, resulting in a higher ratio of ^{18}O
Carbon, x10⁹ metric tons/yr
5.0
2.5
0.0
1890 1910 1930 1950 1970 1990
Year
MAN'S PRODUCTION OF CARBON DIOXIDE
Yr. ave. degrees Fahrenheit
59.5
59.0
58.5
58.0
1890 1910 1930 1950 1970 1990
Year
MEASURED GLOBAL TEMPERATURE

If you're of green leanings – ecologically sound, that is, not a new recruit to the Navy – then *Save the Planet* is full of useful info

cont. from p93

heap in your back garden or cutting your energy bills? See, they're not expecting you to chuck bricks through McDonalds' windows or anything like that.

The best bit about this section is a built-in word processor which contains the names and addresses of relevant officials at the White House. You simply type in the body of your letter and the program does the rest. There is even a hints file if you are at a loss for words. Great stuff.

Thankfully the tone of the text is not worthy or preachy and far from sensationalist. Mostly it is objective, concise and lively, though occasionally a bit dry. The main problem is that one page looks very like next, which does become a bit wearisome after a while. A bit more variation in layout and colour might have made the disk a more enticing read.

It remains, though, a very impressively put together disk, and would be perfect for schools and groups, as well as any individual who wants to know a bit more about man's self-destructive nature.

PC 85%

Space Maths (Licenceware)

Amiga • APD138 • PD Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 612259

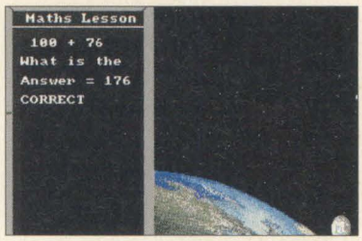
More maths in space. It certainly seems to be the flavour of the month.

The program opens for some bizarre reason with a burst of Axel F, followed by some pretty good digitised speech welcoming you to the game. So far so impressive, and the screen, showing a rather spiffy picture of the Earth from space, and the fact that it tells you to plug in your joystick reinforces the impression that you're in for something special.

But you're not. The main bulk of this game is spent answering some rather boring sums that you'll probably need a pen and paper to work out (302 x 12, 227 x 39 and the like) plonked on screen in a pretty uninspiring manner. When you get five right you finally get to shoot at one solitary alien for extra points. Yawn.

Not very exciting.

AMIGA 57%



***Space Maths*: it doesn't look exciting and it's even less exciting to play**

Racing cars and number zapping ? School was never like this when I was a lad

Computer School (PD)

ST • EDU 953ST • Riverdene 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN
☎ 0734 452416

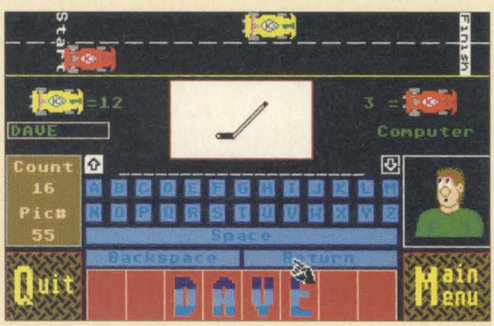
Do the teachers at your school tend to leap up and down and wave their arms about ecstatically when you work out that five minus two is three? Or does spelling 'chair' mean the difference between winning and losing a car race? No? Then you obviously don't go to *Computer School*.

Computer School comprises three separate programs all written by the same coding team. None of them are particularly earth-shattering in the gameplay department, but they make good use of cartoon-style graphics to take the pain out of expanding your child's mind.

Plus and Minus is a multi-choice maths game with a selection of five numbers at the top of the screen. Under this is a bar on which is a 'thing' that looks like a printer carriage. You use this 'thing' to shoot at the numbers – well, what *do* you call something you use to shoot numbers? You're given some simple maths problems – you can choose plus or minus sums only or mixed – and you have to choose which of the numbers at the top is the right answer. Then you line up your lethal printer carriage and blast away.

If you're right then a couple of mad-looking teachers at the bottom of the screen have a kind of euphoric manic fit, with arms and legs all over the place like a spider trying to breakdance. Get it wrong and they look as if someone's been peeling an extra strong onion just off camera.

You can choose how many questions you want to answer and the level of difficulty. The easiest only uses numbers up to 10 while the most difficult goes all the way to 1,000. The multi-choice format is a bit limiting, especially in the harder levels, and the game has some appalling musical jingles which always seem to come in too late. The mad teachers and colourful graphics compensate for these minor niggles, though.



I'm roaring into the lead here. Just a few more correctly-spelt words and I'll zoom past the finishing line

Spelling takes the form of a car race which you can either play against a friend or the computer. A picture of some everyday object pops up in a window on the screen. You have to spell out what it is to move your car along a track at the top. You enter the letters by clicking the mouse on an on-screen grid, which, unlike the computer keyboard, is arranged in alphabetical order.

In the one-player game if you spell the word incorrectly, then the computer's car is moved on instead. In two-player mode you take turns.

The main problem is that sometimes a picture pops up and it's not clear what you are supposed to call it. For example, is a music cassette a tape or a cassette? Is a cup a cup or a mug? Is a CDTV a computer or a white elephant?

The program includes a picture editor, which enables you to create your own pictures and name them. So if your child prodigy has learnt how to spell all the words included in the program, you simply create some more.

Memory is basically *Match Pairs* with a grid of 50 cards to turn over. The game gives you about 15 seconds to study the whole grid then blanks out all the cards. You click on one and it turns over. Then you have to try and remember where its partner is. If you click on the right one then a digitised voice tells you that you have made a match and the cards stay picture side up. If you're wrong, then both cards are turned back over.

***Memory* is a version of that classic stand-by of educational software *Match Pairs*, but the selection of pictures is impressive**

You can choose what you want on the cards – letters, numbers, a variety of pictures – and they are all pretty bright and colourful. You are also allowed up to 99,999 moves, but you'd probably be bored way before then. Of this type of game, and there are plenty around, it 's one of the best.

An extra feature common to each of the program is a progress graph which automatically appears on screen at the end of each game. A nice touch which is typical of the thought which has gone into the *Computer School* series. Three for the price of one? Can't be bad.

ST 83%

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cont. from p94

Movie Database (PD)

PC • Advantage • 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ
☎ 0242 224340

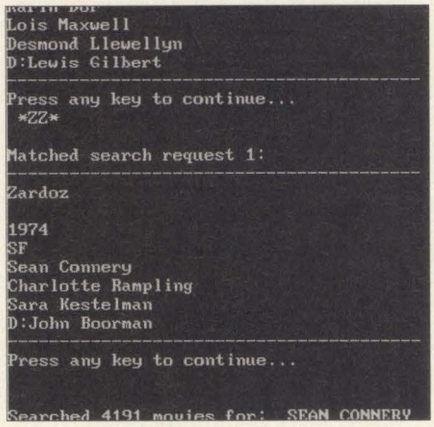
Want to find out who directed that Australian classic *Picnic At Hanging Rock*? Need to know how many Bond films there were and in what order they were released? Then *Movie Database* is not the program for you.

Rather dull to look at, not very friendly to use and about as comprehensive as a public school, *Movie Database* is, frankly, a bit of a disappointment. One of its better features is that you can enter two fields when searching for films, Doris Day and Rock Hudson for example.

Conversely, after every search, the program automatically quits and you have to reload if you want to look up something else.

It does contain some useful information for the casual film goer, but serious film buffs will just become frustrated at its limitations.

PC 45%



***Movie Database*: not the most attractive, nor the most comprehensive, database**

Geography (Bannerware)

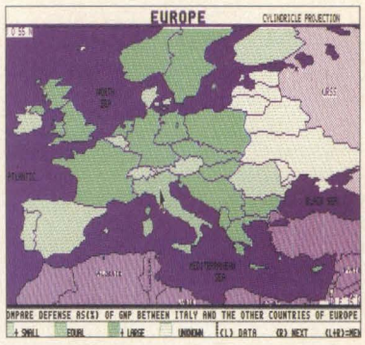
ST • 79 • Jennix PD
66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB

If you're bored with looking at maps on which the sea is blue and the land is green, then this program should appeal to you – the first thing it lets you do is change the colours on its digital globe, so you can have a pink and yellow world if you want.

This disk is a cut-down version of a commercial program which contains data on every country in the world. This bannerware version is restricted to Europe, but it remains a very useful and well put together program.

The variety of information it contains is impressive, everything from the obvious capital cities and main languages to birth rates, literacy rates and defence budget as a percentage of gross national product (Italy's is 2.7 per cent, don'tcha know). The program's main use is to compare statistical data of different countries – this can be one country in comparison to the rest of Europe, or two countries in a head to head.

You start out by pointing out the country or countries you want to



Did you know that Cyprus has the highest death rate in Europe? I did, but only because I learnt this and many other fascinating facts from *Geography*

More KidKrogs • More KidKrogs • More KidKrogs • More KidKrogs • More Kid

KidProgs are the collective name for a group of programs written by American programmer Dr D A Brumleve. A batch of them were reviewed last issue. And as if that wasn't enough, here's some more. All the programs in the series have an educational slant, aimed at making your kids a little bit brighter without them realising it.

Barnimal (PD)

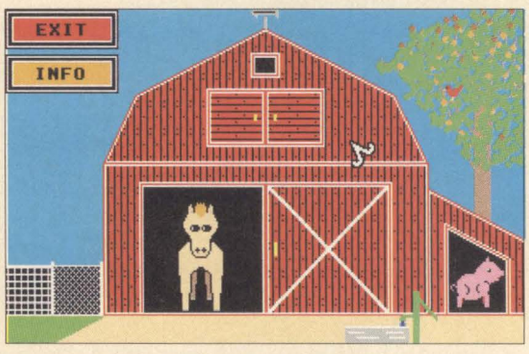
ST • CH009 • Captain Hack's 19 Latimer Drive, Laindown, Essex SS15 4RD
☎ 0268 416888

If you thought that a definition of slow was driving on the M25 during rush hour, then you haven't used this program. Your first warning sign is the fact the loading seems to take an eternity. This might make you think, "Great, this must be something really special," but you'd be wrong.

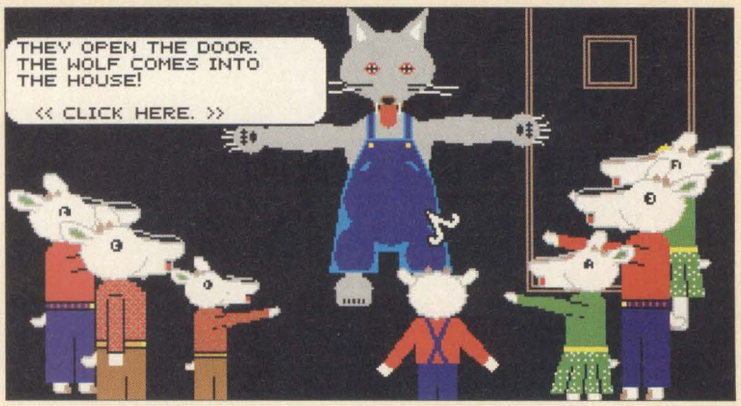
Not that it's bad. The basic game is simple enough. You are presented with a picture of a farmyard. When you click on any of the doors you hear a farmyard sound – a moo, a neigh, an oink, you know the sort of thing. You then have to guess what animal made the noise before the doors open. The problem is you'd probably be able to read out every animal name in the Encyclopaedia Britannica before the doors do finally open.

The farmyard sound are very good – there shouldn't be any real problems identifying them – and the graphics are jolly enough, but basically the whole thing is very dull. Added to this, the positioning of the animals behind the doors never changes, which makes the game just as much a test of memory as recognition. I imagine most kids would become rapidly bored with *Barnimal*, unless they had a very patient parent with them.

ST 45%



***Barnimal*: click on a door, listen for the animal noise, try to work out what the animal is, then wait, and wait, and wait, and...**



***The Wolf And The Seven Kids*: you control the destiny of the kids. Do they play it safe or get eaten?**

The Wolf And The Seven Kids (PD)

ST • CH009\E • Captain Hack's 19 Latimer Drive, Laindown, Essex SS15 4RD
☎ 0268 416888

An everyday story of your average goat family. Mum goes out to the shops leaving her seven kids to be harassed by a hungry wolf.

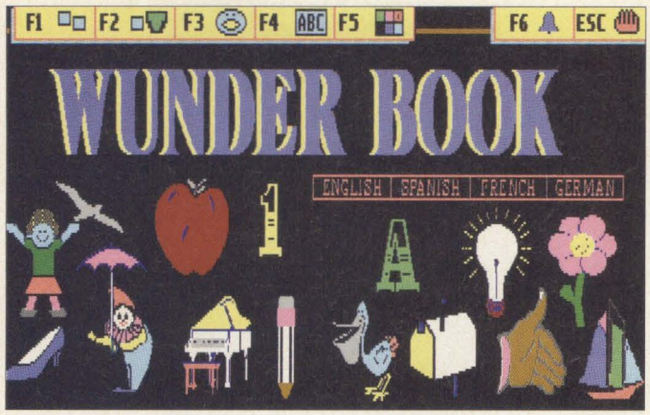
The idea behind this program is quite original. The story is told in a series of cartoon-style still pictures, but you have to click on the characters to reveal speech bubbles. Some will just tell you what the characters are saying, others will offer you a choice of actions. For example, after mum has left the house, one of the kids suggests they should have a balloon fight while one of the others reckons that they should play quietly. Click on the one you want them to do, and it's on to the next picture.

Of course, the right answer in this case was 'play quietly'. If you're feeling a bit mischievous and want to follow up the more exciting, but naughty, options that you're offered you always end up with the wolf gobbling up all the kids.

Yep, that's right. This is a morality tale in a typically American *Waltons* style. But it pays to be sensible because then you get to play for longer. A good idea which is generally well presented, but again, it's a bit slow.

ST 68%

compare on the main map screen (at which point you are played its national anthem) then you choose what statistics you want to compare. Once the computer has presented you with this info you can usually choose to see it represented in some graphical form. All very simple to operate and using workmanlike but clear graphics.



Parlez-vous whatever? Well, I obviously don't, and while *Wunder Book* won't turn you into an interpreter, it should help you learn a few foreign nouns

The program includes a quiz section in which you have to identify countries and capitals. I've seen some programs in the public domain that consist of this feature alone, which shows what good value this disk is, even in a cut-down form.

ST 79%

Wunder Book (Shareware)

PC • 4290/PP • Softcell Services 25 Maywood, Drunna Pontydun CF7 9PT
☎ 0443 238630

You might think that a spelling game that can't even spell its own name correctly would be well worth giving a miss. But *Wunder Book* is a multi-lingual spelling game and the spelling of its title is actually the German for Wonder. Clever little device, eh?

Wunder Book speaks in four tongues – English, French, Spanish and German – but its vocabulary is a bit limited. It only seems to know nouns. There are five simple but colourful games to play, but, for some bizarre reason, two of them don't involve words at all, so it doesn't matter in what language you play them (the instructions are always in English). The other three provide an excellent, fun way of learning how to spell the foreign names for familiar, everyday objects.

Games one and two are recognition puzzles. You are shown four objects or animals, and you have to point out which ones are similar or which is the odd one out. Basic stuff, bit very nicely done.

In game three you have to spell out the name of the object using an on-screen QWERTY keyboard. The task is made easier by the fact that the relevant letters are highlighted on the keyboard.

Game four is similar, except this time the keyboard gives you no hints, but some of the letters are already in place. You have to fill in the gaps.

In game five it's back to picking out the relevant objects from a choice of four. This time the name of an object is displayed on screen and you have to match it to a picture. Simple enough in English, not so simple in French, German and Spanish (unless the word is elephant which seems to be virtually the same across the EEC).

The graphics in all games are big,

cont. on p98

ogs • More KidKrogs • More KidKrogs • More KidKrogs • More KidKrogs • More

KidPublish (PD)

ST • EDU 07 • ST Club 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney Street, Nottingham NG1 1LX

This is more like it. A word processor package for kids that is really rather good. Colourful, noisy and dead easy to use, *KidPublish* should help make kids more willing to sit down and write thank you letters to Aunty Agatha for that hanky she bought them for their birthday.

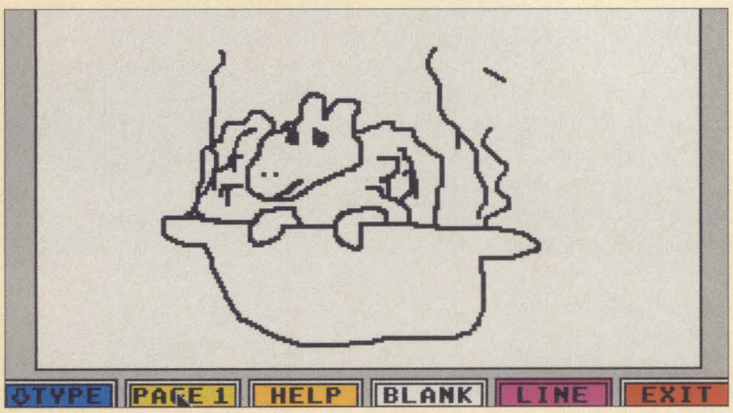
The letters are printed on-screen in large letters to make them easy to read. There's no word-wrap, which is a shame, but at least it doesn't overwrite, so it's easy to go back and insert words and letters.

Just like a real word processor, files can be saved, loaded and printed. All the options are accessed from big, bold icons. In terms you style you can only underline.

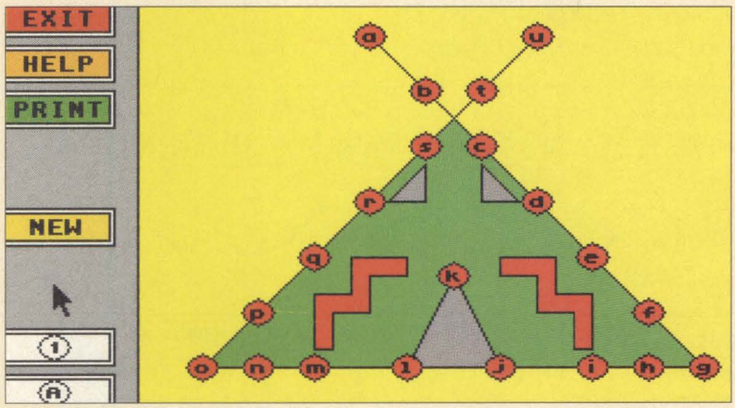
A basic black and white drawing program has also been included, which is also simple to use. The pictures cannot be combined on the same pages as text.

Drawbacks include an inability to flow text from one page to the next and the fact that the program can only handle up to five pages of text and five pictures at a time. It seems to assume that most kids can only concentrate for about 30 words. Apart from these little niggles it's a very worthwhile little program.

ST 74%



***KidPublish*: here's a piccie I drew using the program's art section. What is it? Answers on a postcard**



***Dot to Dot* with a twist – you can join letters if you want, instead of the usual numbers**

Dot To Dot (PD)

ST • 019 • Jennix PD, 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB

Believe it not, this is a computerised version of joining the dots, but with a little extra educational twist.

The program starts off with the traditional few straight lines and lots of numbered dots which have to be linked up in the correct numerical order. Actually the dots are more like large red disks, but don't worry about them ruining the final picture – all will be revealed soon.

Joining the dots is done by clicking on them in the right order. When they have all been linked to reveal a devastatingly life-like, if rather angular, car, tent, cat or whatever, the dots vanish. Now the picture is ready to be coloured in using a simple six-coloured painting feature supplied with the program.

The way in which the dots are labelled can be altered so that instead of joining up numbers, you have to join up letters, either upper or lower case. Quite a dinky little feature, I think, that adds to its educational value.

The selection of pictures seems to be quite wide. I've seen it being used a number of times, and the same picture has yet to come up twice. In fact, it's very hard to think of a way this program could be improved.

ST 90%

cont. from p97

bold, bright and fun. The design of the screen is also very attractive, and even the menu screen is well designed and easy to understand. Extremely friendly to use, the game can be played with either a mouse or from the keyboard.

It's a pity abut the rather irritating tunes that erupt from the PC's soundchip at the end of each range of questions, but at least there's a Quiet option, which has the added bonus of speeding up the games. If you want to prepare your infants for 1992 then this disk is highly recommended.

PC 88%

Simon's Colours (Licenceware)

Amiga • APD138 • PD Soft ,1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 612259

Remember Simon? That odd electronic game that looked like two matte black hub caps with four coloured blobs on it that bleeped and flashed. You used to be able to play a number of different games on it, and this program is based on the most boring of them.

It has the four coloured blobs floating space (funny how when coders want to make educational games fun they so often set them in space). They flash and go 'bloop' in a sequence, and, when they've finished, you have to click on them in the same order. If you get the order correct then the next sequence has an extra flash and bloop. This carries on until you reach a sequence of 10, when the program congratulates you on being a clever dick.

For what it is it's very well done. It looks good, and the 'bloops' are quite tuneful. But I can imagine it would be of limited interest to most kids. Perhaps an upgrade with a few variations on the theme is in the offing?

AMIGA 63%

***Simon*: try to remember a series of up to 10 flashes and bleeps and you'll probably end up with a Top 10 hit**

Funny Face 2 (Shareware)

PC • 8795/PF • Softcell Services 25 Maywood, Drunna Pontydun CF7 9PT
☎ 0443 238630

Funny Face is a bit like a police photofit, but I hope I never bump into any villains with fizzogs like the lot in this excellent program.

You start off with a blank face. There are a number of icons around the edge of the screen depicting various features -- eyes, mouth, eyebrows, ears etc. Select one of them using the cursor keys and a range of nearly forty different variations of that feature appears on-screen. So, for example, the noses range from small button noses to a huge honker with a bone through it. Or you can choose from bright perky eyes, some snazzy spectacles and a pair that look like their owner had a heavy night down the boozer.

You build up the face bit by bit and finally you can colour it using a paint option.

The main strength of the program is the huge variety of features that it offers (facial features, that is). There are potentially thousands of faces you can create, and it's almost impossible to come up with a dull one. They all look great. And when you're happy with your face you can save it.

The only major problem is that there is no facility for mouse control which makes colouring your faces a real chore. Also, one you have chosen a feature you can't undo it – you can change it, but if, say, you stuck on a beard and then you decide you don't want one, hard luck. But don't let that

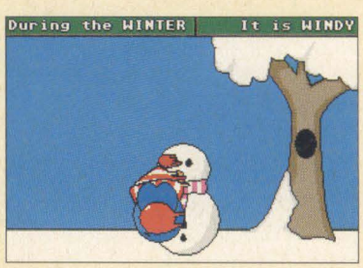
I'm so dizzy my head is spinning, like a whirlpool it never ends, and it's you girl

Dizzy Funtime (Licenceware)

ST • PRO 18• Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT
☎ 0463 225736

Dizzy Funtime was not the party Vic Reeves threw when his record reached number one in the charts. Rather it's a set of very attractively designed educational games for the under-sevens from the ever dependable Budgie programming group.

There are eight games in all most of them featuring a cartoon character called Dizzy Lizzy who's small and round (I wonder where they got the inspiration?) He tends to hang around on screen pulling various funny faces, depending on whether you get the answers right or wrong, and egging you on.



In *Seasons* Dizzy has to endure the extreme weather conditions of each season

Shapes is basically a version of Match Pairs. You have to try and match the pairs hidden behind sets of doors by only opening two doors at a time. Each time you are successful an apple falls off a tree, which is apparently your reward. The program keeps track of how many guesses you take each game, so you can work out whether your memory is improving.

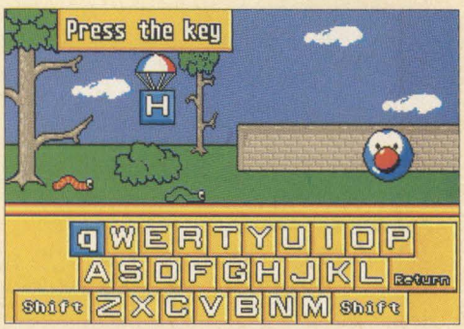
vs is all about recognising letters and is sub-divided into four separate games. Each features the same screen showing a tree, a brick wall and our Dizzy. In the first game you have to type in on the keyboard the upper case letter which rolls along the wall. If you're right then a caterpillar climbs the tree. The game finishes when it reaches the top. If your guess is wrong then the caterpillar falls all the way back to the bottom. Game two is the same except that the letters are upper case.

Game three involves parachuting letter bombs and racing caterpillars. Letters fall down the screen and you have to type them in before they hit the ground and explode. If you do, your caterpillar moves forward. Fail, and the enemy bug makes its move. Warning: this game gets very, very fast at times.

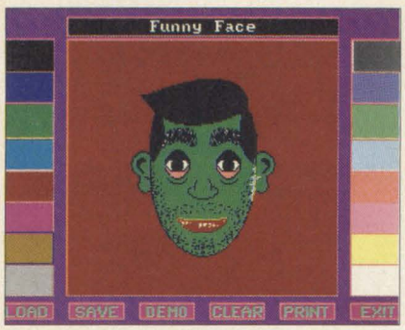
Game four is a bit of a let down. All you do is spell out the word that pops up on the wall. There's no sense of competition.

Clock Fun involves working out what time a clock says and entering it on to an on-screen grid. Nice use of sound fx for the chimes, but some of the orange-on-yellow text is a pain to read. Dizzy is present this time climbing a pendulum to gauge your success. OK, but a bit tedious.

In *Picture* you have to match a picture with a selection of words to make Dizzy climb a ladder. The difficult level is fun as you have to race



Quick! Type an 'H' in on your keyboard before that letter hits the ground then watch your caterpillar leap into the lead



A self portrait. The author on one of his better days! Handsome fellow, isn't he?

put you off. This program is enormous fun and should keep your nippers amused for hours, once they've managed to prise you away from the keyboard, that is.

PC 87%

Evolution (PD)

Amiga •V10 • PD Soft , 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 612259

Evolution is a bit of a pot pourri of variable programettes with a common scientific leaning theme tying them together.

Cloud is a very pretty-looking program, that generates random cloud cover. You can change variables such as pressure and moisture and other meteorological-type things that I don't understand to alter the pattern. It all seems a bit too specialised to be of much use to anyone without a good knowledge of weather systems already and not helped by rather brief documentation.

Units is simply a very comprehensive listing of conversions which covers just about every unit of distance, mass, speed and weight you could imagine. Very useful.

Evolution 4 is all about bugs and how their genes affect them. It looked like a load of wobbly dots all over the screen to me. Little that I did seemed to have much affect on the proceedings but I expect it is a worthy piece of programming.

Evo is probably the best of the bunch. It takes a while to load, but it's worth the wait. It shows the path human evolution has taken over the past 20 million years. The screen features a graph representing this time scale and a window which displays how the cranium of our ancestors has developed during this time.

If you slide the pointer along the time scale you will see the skull evolve and grow. Apparently the program contains 601 skull drawings. It also contains a map which I could make no sense of and a very handy glossary of terms.

Func 2D plots graphs. You feed in a formula and it plots them. Fair enough, but a bit humdrum, and the resulting graphs are a bit wimpy.

Formula is virtually a 3D version of *Func 2D*, but it seems a bit limited in the values you can feed in. There seems to be no way to make it understand square root, for example.

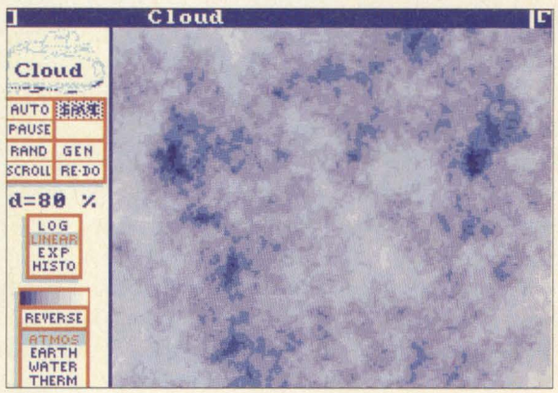
Calc 3.0 is a scientific calculator, the sort with sines and cosines and all that kind of complicated stuff. Again, it works, but it could have been better represented graphically.

Worm is, well, I'm not sure really. You tell the program how many worms you want, how long and wide they should be and in what colours and away it goes, generating the little blighters in all their wiggling glory. It's fun, but mystifying. What's the point of it all?

This is one of those disks that could only be public domain. A real oddity, but with a couple of goodies well worth checking out.

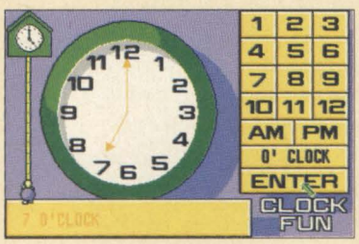
AMIGA 69%

cont. on p100



Ever had the urge to play with a cloud simulator? No? Well, then perhaps one of the other programs on the *Evo* compilation will appeal

king me spin, I'm so dizzy my head is spinning, I'm so dizzy my head is spinning



In *Clock Fun* you have to work out what the clock on the left says then enter your answer into the grid on the right. If you get it right Dizzy climbs the pendulum

against a 'red meanie', but the easy level is pretty pointless as you have the choice of one whole word. It's not exactly difficult.

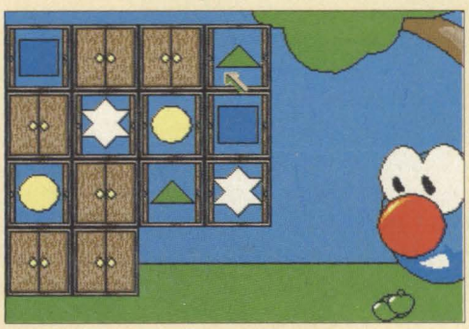
There are two money-based games, called, unimaginatively *Money 1* and *Money 2* and these are the low point of the set. In the first you select a fruit from a grid and you are told how much it costs and what coins you have. You then have to click on your coins to make up the exact amount. The second game involves balancing two sides of an equation by shifting around the coins. Graphically this is represented by a magnet picking up the coins, which could be a bit misleading to kids, as no British coin contains any iron. This may seem a trifling point, but these are supposed to be educational games. In fact, in terms of graphics these two games are the least inspiring on the disk.

Conversely, *Seasons* looks great. Basically an animated storybook, it tells you in words and pictures what happens in the various seasons. So, "In summer, the fields are green", and, "In winter, it is windy". The pictures are fun and colourful, and Dizzy is often on hand, sunbathing, making snowmen or whatever else is relevant to the season. This segment is only marred by some poor grammar which is unforgivable in an educational program.

Finally, *Mouse* provides some practice for honing your mouse technique. It is divided into five games, three of which involve locating lumps of cheese for a starving animated mouse. You have to be quite accurate with your clicking, and swap between using the left and right buttons. The other two games test how speedy your reactions are. Some of the mouse games a bit jerky, but aside from this small niggle they are great fun with bright, bold graphics and appealing sound effects.

This is an excellent collection, only marred by a couple of silly mistakes. Using the Dizzy character as a linking theme is a nice touch and the sheer range of games should give this collection lasting appeal. Extremely good value for (very little) money.

ST 82%



Dizzy looks a bit worried, which is strange as you've already managed to match up three pairs in *Shapes*

Dizzy Funtime (Shareware)

Amiga • ESP
32a Sothchurch Road, Southend Essex SS1 2ND

This collection is also available for the Amiga. It has generally better sound fx and a couple of minor enhancements to the graphics, such as some whizzy effects with the pointer on the menu page.

The Amiga collection also features one less game for some inexplicable reason. Then again, it's the second money game so it's really no great loss. The mouse games also tend to play more smoothly, though the speed tests are minutely easier.

Other than that, there's not a lot to choose between them, so neither Amiga or ST owners should worry that they're missing out on any fun.

AMIGA 82%

cont. from p99

Googol Maths Games (PD)

PC • Softcell Shareware Services, 25 Maywood, Drunna Pontydun CF7 9PT
☎ 0443 238630

There are many ways of dressing maths games up to make them more enticing to figure-loathing schoolkids, and *Googal Maths Games* has found three more.

Googal Climber is a platform game in which the answers to sums are hidden on various ledges. A sum pops up and you have to work out what the answer is, check where it's hidden on-screen, then leap your way to it using the cursor keys. If you leap at the wrong moment you can hit your head on the underside of a ledge and explode, losing one of your precious three lives. You also have to watch out for lethal rolling balls. Unusually for this type of game, the action is very fast and a lot of fun.

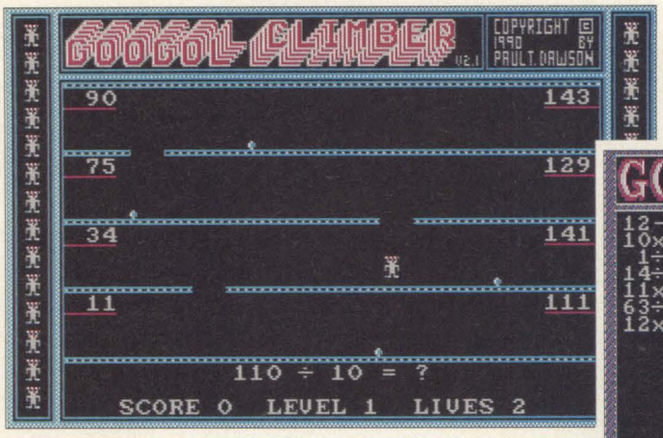
Googolpede is the most difficult, and the least exciting of the three games. You control a long bug with the cursor keys, and you have to direct it to a T or an F depending on whether you think that the answer to a maths sum at the bottom of the page is true or false. It's hard enough trying to stop the damn thing hitting the walls or biting off its own tail without having to bother about working out the maths. Irritating.

Googolvaders is much better. It's *Space Invaders* where the aliens have been replaced by – aaaarrrrgggghhhh – sums! I bet there's many a schoolkid who's had nightmares like this. You have to shoot the sums by lining up your ship and then firing the correct answer to the sums using the numbers on the top line of the keyboard. Every now and then, a strange-looking robot appears and shouts' "Wowzer, wowzer." I'm not sure why. It's incredibly addictive and, again, fast moving, helped by some superior sound fx.

As a whole, this collection is very well presented. The graphics are, to be polite, basic, but there are some nice touches, and two of the games are highly playable. Even the menu screens and high score tables have been very well thought out. If you have a printer then there is the facility for printing out certificates to show how well you've done. Great stuff.

PC **73%**

cont. p10



Two of the three *Googal Maths Games* are great fun, even if the graphics do look a bit old-fashioned. But they manage to strike the perfect balance between education and fun. Pity the third game lets the side down a bit really

Star Trek versus Doctor Who – the battle of the TV science fiction classics

Star Trek 25th Anniversary (Shareware)

ST • 247 • Jennix PD, 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB

The only graphics you get on the *Star Trek 25th Anniversary Diskzine* are some very dodgy digitised pictures

Has it really been 25 years since William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and DeForest Kelly first appeared on our screens in those funny gold and blue uniforms in a ship that looked like a frisby having an argument with a tent frame? Well in the UK, no it hasn't actually, and this is just one of facts that you will discover on this *25th Anniversary Star Trek* diskzine.

Dealing with all aspects of the *Star Trek* phenomenon – the original series, the films, the *Next Generation*, comics, books, fanclubs – this diskzine is generally very well researched. There are some impressive in-depth profiles on all the main characters, intelligent interviews with the actors and fact files galore, including a full list of all the regular actors' birthdays.

The writing is of a surprisingly high quality. I'm not sure whether the interviews were conducted especially for the disk (though I very much doubt it) and if not there's no indication where they came from, but they remain interesting and lively.

On the downside it is very dull visually. Colouring up the text might look pretty, but it hardly makes you want to read on. The only visuals of any kind are a series of appallingly digitised pictures collected together onto a slideshow which I doubt anyone will want to look at more than once. Also the disk offers nothing in the way of interactivity, which is a waste.

One for the fans only.

ST **62%**

wHom II (PD)

Amiga • Available from Whonatics South East, 7 The laurels, Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9LF

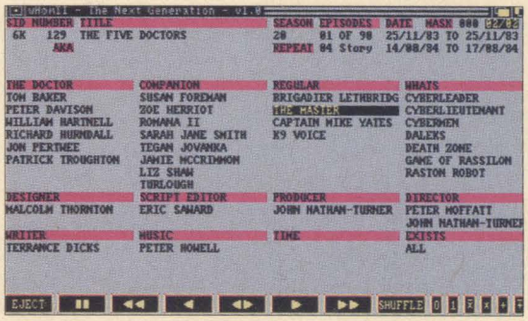
There were over 150 *Doctor Who* stories broadcast over 26 years but Steven Speilberg spent more on the end credits of ET than the BBC did on the entire series. But the program is still held dear by many science fiction fans (those with a sense of humour at least) and this disk should appeal to them.

It's a Doctor Who database that covers an immense amount of information. For each story there are details of cast, crew, story elements and production codes. Everyone from the actors who've played the Doctor to the make-up people and stunt coordinators are name-checked.

It's a very nicely put together database, with clearly laid out pages for each story and a novel options bar which resembles the buttons on a cassette player. So, for example, if you click on the name Matt Irvine (he's a special effects bod) under the story *Warriors' Gate* then press the arrow forward key, it will take you to the next story on which he was the effects designer. This kind of interconnectiveness is very useful.

There is one main drawback – there are great wodges of information missing, especially from the early stories. This undermines the whole value of the database, especially as there seems no easy way of entering data into it. A shame, really, as a lot of thought has been put into the design.

ST **65%**



***wHom II* is a very impressive-looking and easy-to-use database which only suffers from some glaring omissions in its information**

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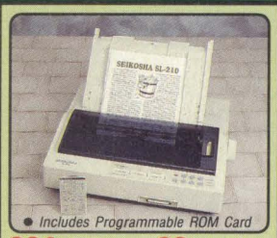

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324 CPS **80** COLUMN

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800 CPS **136** COLUMN

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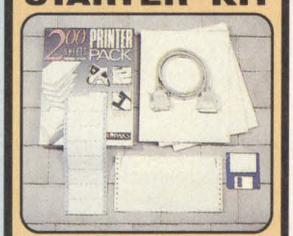

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cont. from p100

Henrietta's Book Of Spells (Bannerware)

PC • Advantage • 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ
☎ 0242 224340

This is a cut-down version of full priced game from Scetlander, released into the public domain as a teaser to try to entice you to buy the real thing. But this PD version is very good in itself – maybe *too* good from Scetlander's point of view, because it might stop people from buying the real thing.

It's a spelling game (the title's a good pun, yes? Oh, well, perhaps not) in which the only feature that has been disabled is the choice of word length answers – you have to use six letter words. I suspect, however, that the vocabulary of the program has also been severely reduced, as I noticed the same words coming up again and again ('helmet' especially for some reason) but there are still enough to make the game worthwhile.

***Henrietta's Book Of Spells* is such a good taster for the full-priced product that you'll probably be satisfied with the PD version**

There are five sub-games with a common linking theme. Henrietta's boyfriend Harry has been captured by an evil witch and turned into a frog. Now Henrietta has to beat the witch and her skeleton henchman at a series of games, collecting a letter at the end of each to discover the magic word to turn Henry back into his normal self.

The games include a version of hangman, code-cracking (where one letter stands for another), filling in missing letters, spelling a word from memory and anagrams. They are all good fun and progress in the various games is represented in a number of inventive ways – a tug of war, climbing a pyramid, a race between a frog and a skeleton, etc.

Unfortunately, the colours are vile. I'm not sure whether this is just a feature of the PD version, but it looks as if someone forget to include any blues and greens in the pictures.

Don't be put off by *Henrietta's Book Of Spells*' bannerware status. This program is a demo that outdoes many fully-fledged programs, both PD and commercial. If the cut-down version's this good, then the full-priced version must be a corker!

PC 80%

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Period 1	G. Studies	English	English		Computing
Teacher	Various	Miss Stevens	Mrs Hunt.		Mr White
Room	A22	A6	A3		A22
Period 2	G. Studies	English	English		Computers
Teacher	Various	Miss Stevens	Mrs Hunt.		Mr White
Room	A22	A6	A4		A22
Period 3	Computers				
Teacher	Miss Hughes				
Room	A22				
Period 4	Computers				
Teacher	Miss Hughes				
Room	A22				
Period 5		Computers		English	English
Teacher		Mrs Hughes		Mrs Hunt.	Miss Stevens

The timetables that *Time Table Printer* prints out are not quite the same as the way they are presented on-screen, but they could still do with being a bit more comprehensive

Time Table Printer (Licenceware)

Amiga • 1100 • Amiganuts,169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX
☎ 0703 785680

If your nipper always seems to lose their timetable within a day of the start of term, then this program provides the answer. It allows you to store a timetable on computer so that you can print it out as many times as you like, and amend it simply without having to resort to gallons of Tippex.

Designed to be used by even the most computer-illiterate person it is very intuitive. But just in case, a very clear and comprehensive documentation file is included.

The program can handle a six day timetable with up to 15 periods a day. To create a timetable you simply boot up the program and answer the questions it asks you about how many days you want it to cover, how many periods there are in a day and the name of the lesson, teacher and room number for each period. Making amendments to existing timetables is just a case of calling up a certain period and making the changes.

Unfortunately, the program will only accept entries of up to 12 characters so if you've got a teacher called Mr Carrington-Smythe you're going to have to call him by that nick-name he doesn't know about instead.

The program defaults to print out at Near Letter Quality (NLQ) on most printers. The actual printed timetable could do with being a more clearly laid out, but it does its job well enough.

Hardly earth-shattering, but useful.

AMIGA 67%

Don't get the needle, let your Amiga do all the hard work

X-Stitch (Licenceware)

Amiga • Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA
☎ 0942 495261

How to get stitched up by a PD program and not worry. *X-Stitch* is designed to turn IFF pictures into print-outs that can be used as the basis for needlework masterpieces.

Rightfully the author has assumed no computer knowledge in the user and has written a very easy-to-follow documentation file and an extremely simple-to-use program. Even your granny could use it (if you let her borrow your Amiga, that is). Basically you load up a picture from the impressively wide selection that are provided with the program, select the area of the picture you want to use with the mouse, click on the colour in the picture that will be the base (or cloth) colour, click on print and you're away.

There are literally hundreds of different designs that you can use as the basis for needlework projects on *X-Stitch*, because you can pick out any single element from any of the pictures provided

Moments later your printer whirs to life and spouts forth loads of little crosses and a coding grid to show you which areas should be done in which colours.

If the pattern is larger than a standard print-out then it is automatically printed out in sections which you will then have to sticky tape together before getting your needles and thread at the ready.

X-Stitch is a bit limited in terms of the stitches that can be represented on the print-out – it cannot print out cross stitch or half stitch, for example. The author reckons this is because he can find no way to successfully represent these stitches on the kind of bog-standard printer that most of us can afford, so there's a challenge for all you coders.

But the program is good enough for any needlework newcomers, or the occasional dabbler short of a few design ideas.

AMIGA 69%

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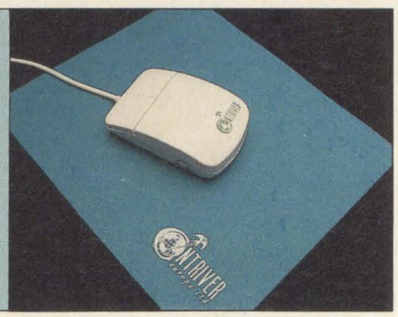

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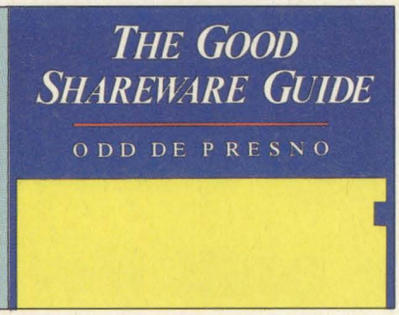

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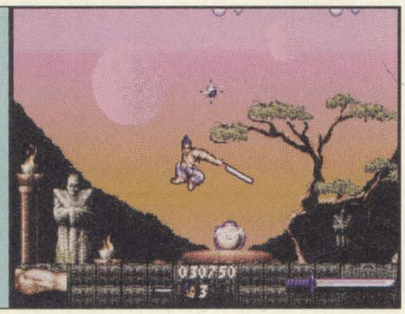

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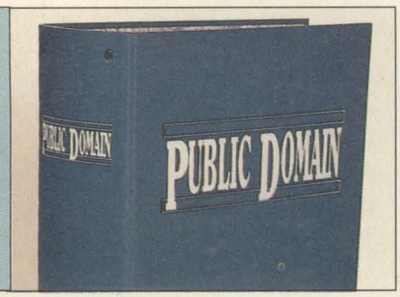

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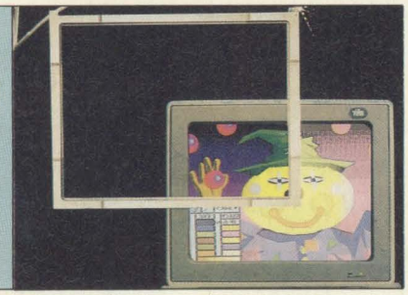

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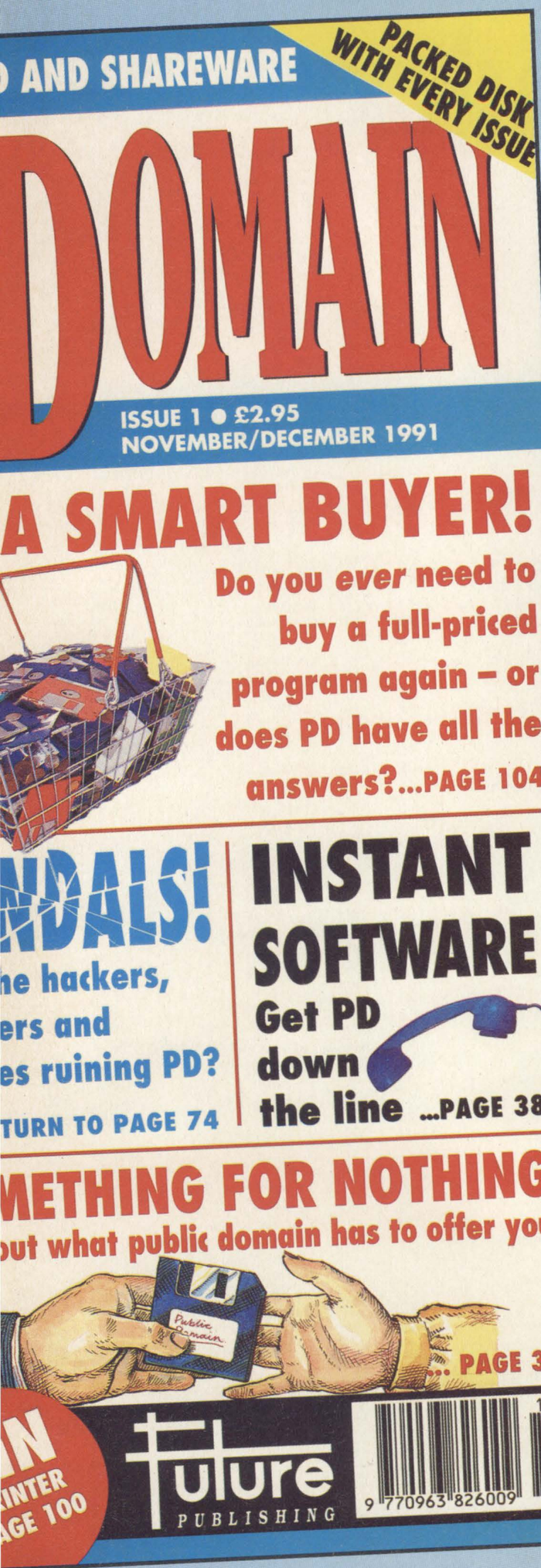

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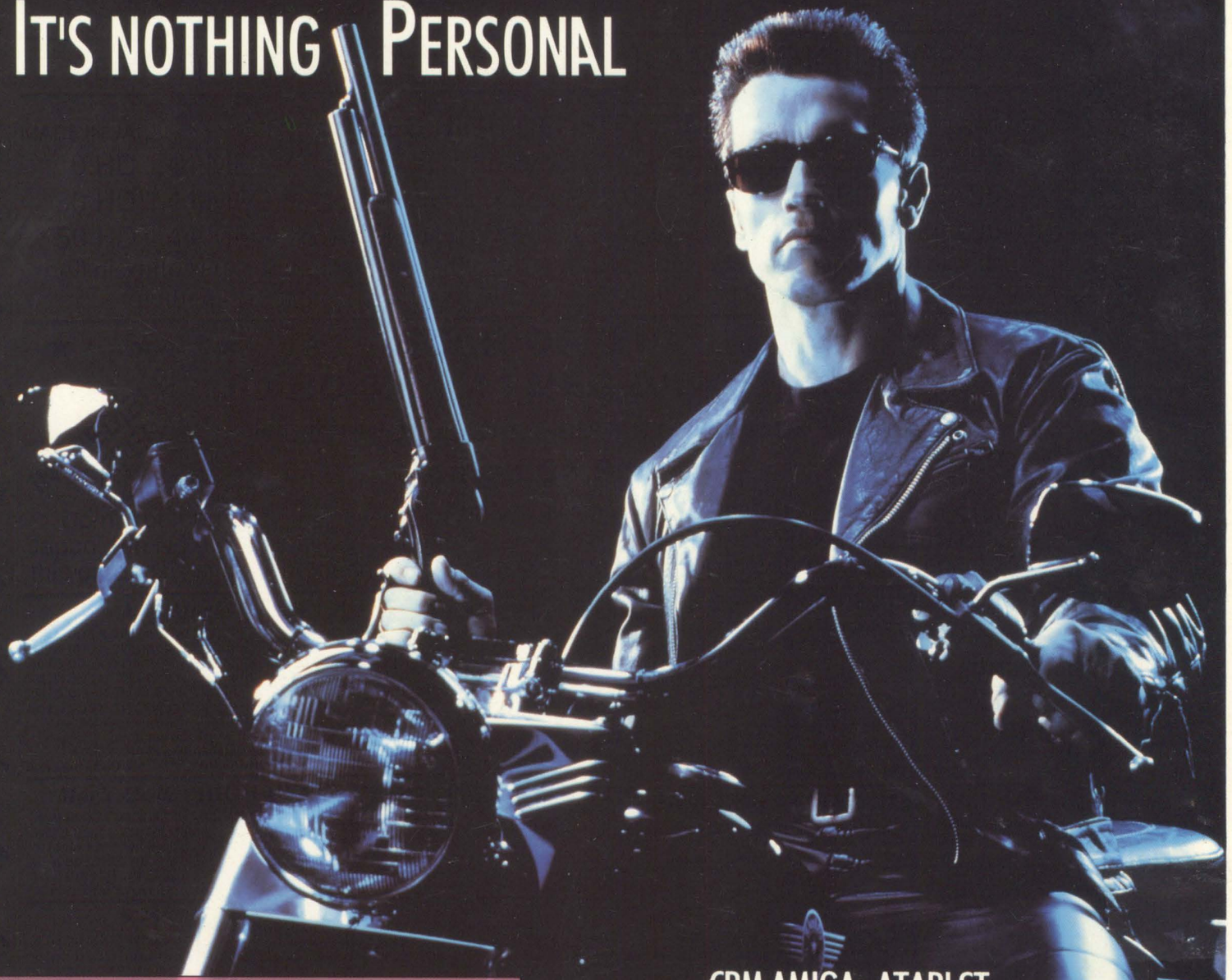

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